Germany's New Religion

THE GERMAN FAITH MOVEMENT

WILHELM HAUER • KARL HEIM • KARL ADAM

Translated by
T. S. K. SCOTT-CRAIG, M.A., B.D.
and
R. E. DAVIES, M.A., B.A. (Theol.)

It is important that we should know what Germany is thinking religiously, for that thinking is at the heart of the country's attitudes and to them nobody can be indifferent. This book will throw much light upon the matter.

[$1.50]

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T. S. K. SCOTT-CRAIG, M.A., B.D.

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By their careful and competent work in making available in English the material in *Germany's New Religion,* these two scholars have rendered a valuable service to all who are interested in the present religious situation in Germany and its possible effect on other countries of the world.

THE ABINGDON PRESS

13 Bibl.
27/28 S. Faith Movement founded in Ismailia 1930.

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THE ABINGDON PRESS
NEW YORK CINCINNATI CHICAGO

[Rare]
BR
856
G442
1937

HAUER; HEIM; ADAM
GERMANY'S NEW RELIGION

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Printed in the United States of America

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Introduction by the Translators

INTRODUCTION BY THE TRANSLATORS

Tübingen—The Home of the Neo-Pagan Movement

The "University Village" of Tübingen, as the students affectionately call it, still preserves a good deal of its early nineteenth-century atmosphere. The "alta Aula," the old main building of the University, still looks down on the gracious splendor of the famous avenue of plane trees and the quiet waters of the Neckar, just as in the days of Hölderlin and Uhland, Strauss and Bauer. The smells, too, of the peasant quarter, which are reminiscent of nothing so much as a Jerusalem suq, remain unchanged. But it bears the stamp of the new Germany as well. A magnificent new University building has been erected in the postwar period, new barracks have been rushed up to house the new army, and the main street resounds daily with the tramp and song of eager Storm Troopers. And it is also now the center of the main types of German theology. The confessional Lutheran Church is represented by its most prominent theologian, Karl Heim; the Catholic Church by its eloquent apologete, Karl

Adam; and the Neo-Pagan religion by its prophet and leader, Wilhelm Hauer. Professor Hauer has become the center of a controversy which is raging all over Germany, and he is everywhere regarded as a serious menace to all types of Christianity. This volume gives the English reader a statement from his own pen—both of his positive aims and views and of his objections to Christianity—and at the same time an idea of the kind of answer which German Protestantism and German Catholicism have to offer on behalf of the Christian faith.

The Antecedents of the German Faith Movement

The eccentricities of foreigners are a notorious source of delight to all English-speaking people, and the newspapers have never been slow to take advantage of the fact. The lurid colors in which they have painted the activities of the new German cults must have left the public with the impression that the Germans, who are so practical, if a little lacking in humor, in other matters, especially foreign politics and the organization of defense, have in the matter of religion an exaggerated taste for the bizarre, and have indulged it to such an extent that they have relapsed into the excesses of prehistoric tribal fetichism. It is hoped that a reading of

this book will prove this not to be the case; but it is necessary to clear away a few preliminary misconceptions.

There has been *no* reintroduction of the worship of Nordic deities such as Thor, Wotan, and the rest of the Scandinavian Pantheon. Hauer makes the point as strongly as possible in one of the articles that follow, but perhaps it is desirable to add the testimony of impartial observers.

Nor, on the other hand, is the German Faith Movement an atheistic movement. It claims to be a counter-religion to Christianity, and to worship a more than human God.

Again, however great the impetus given to it by the National-Socialist Revolution—an impetus which Hauer does not attempt to deny—it is not just a political movement, nor has it been fostered by the State for political ends. Moreover, no one who has had the advantage of hearing Hauer lecture or of holding a private conversation with him would want to deny that he is a sincerely religious man. And his genuine followers are as sincere and religious as he is. There has been acrimony on both sides, though this book only records the charges brought by Hauer against his opponents, but in both cases it has been the acrimony of fanaticism and not of party warfare or ambition.

We must try to see the movement in its historical connections and its modern context. The history of all religious philosophies is necessarily dominated by two main trends of thought. The one school regards God as immanent in the world, that is, as discoverable only in nature and the human genius, and leads logically to one or other of the many forms of pantheism; the other school puts God completely outside the world and regards him as operative in it only through occasional interventions such as, in Christian thought, the creation, or the redemption achieved by Christ. The one school regards the knowledge of God as accessible to all without the help of sacrament or priest; the other finds approach to God impossible without a mediator of some sort, whether it be priest or Church or Bible. But whereas we are accustomed to find attempts, more or less successful, to discover a compromise between the two points of view, the German mind finds such solutions difficult to entertain and seems to regard itself as forced to follow one or other of the two lines of thought to the bitter end. Meister Eckhart, of whom a great deal will be heard in these pages, the mystic of the fourteenth century, condemned by the Catholic Church as a heretic and later reinstated, is the first prominent member of the

immanentist school in Germany. Until the Reformation, and to a more limited extent after it, many members of this school were inside the fold of the Church, either Catholic or Protestant, for example, Tauler and the German mystics of the fifteenth and the Pietists of the seventeenth century; and after the Reformation we find Goethe, Hölderlin, Fichte, and Nietzsche outside the Church. Hauer definitely takes his place as the latest in this succession. On the other side we have the whole spirit of Luther's Reformation and the emphasis of his successors, magnifying the distance between God and the world. The philosophy of Kant belongs to that succession, however little he may resemble Luther in his method of expression, and its ablest, and at the same time most extreme, modern exponent is Karl Barth, according to many the most influential Christian thinker in Germany today.

The other main historical consideration to be borne in mind is that the German mentality has been, from time immemorial—and is, of course, not least at the present moment—excessively race-conscious. No reader of the following articles can fail to be struck by the continual reference to the "depths of the German nature," a phrase which apparently means something to the ordinary German. What it seems to mean

is something like this: German blood and German soil and German race possess a mysterious quality of indwelling power for the possessor of them, and it is this quality which makes the German the heir to a richer inheritance than the other Europeans; this indwelling power is located in the depths of the German nature. It is the mingling of this inherited feeling with the operation of political forces which makes the German revolution of 1933 an event very different from others which seem to resemble it, and which gives to the enthusiasts of the new regime their semireligious idealism. The "mission of Germany to the world" and the "Pan-Germanic ideal" are no mere cloaks for political ambition and acquisitive imperialism, though there are those who use them as such. They are genuine, if sometimes misguided and often dangerous, expressions of something which is native to the German character and can only be suppressed at terrific cost to those who carry out the suppression. The Treaty of Versailles and its present consequences furnish a melancholy testimony to the truth of the last statement.

The particular form which this race-consciousness has recently taken is, as all the world knows, the determined exclusion of all that is biologically or culturally Jewish, or even faintly Semitic, from the German nation-state and the life

of its people. It is well that the psychological roots of German anti-Semitism should be explored, even though such exploration may not lessen the force of our ultimate condemnation.

If we combine immanentist philosophy with the peculiar race-consciousness of the German, we have to a large extent explained the rise of the German Faith Movement. But there are other purely modern factors which should increase our understanding of the phenomenon if sufficiently borne in mind. Karl Heim, in one of a series of lectures recently delivered and published in America,[1] has accurately described the disillusionment which the Great War and the Peace which followed it caused in Germany, and he accounts for the various race-religions, including the German Faith Movement, which have recently sprung up in Germany, as attempts to escape from the alternative between thoroughgoing pessimism and faith in the living God. The modern man, he claims, has lost both his illusions and his faith in God, and all the old loyalties have disappeared. But he must have some sanction for his actions and some sort of inner peace, and pessimism offers neither. So he takes refuge in the nation as the creator and revealer of moral and spiritual values, and seeks to carry into the time of peace the courage which

[1] *The Church of Christ and the Problems of the Day.*

the comradeship of war has created. This temper, continues Heim, has resulted in the emergence of two types of race-religion, the crude "German Religion" of Ernst Bergmann, who professes faith in a God who is nothing more than the overflowing vitality of the German people, and the much more refined and highly developed religion of Hauer. There is no reason to dispute the substantial accuracy of this account, which makes abundantly clear why the soil has proved so favorable to the crop which Hauer has sown in it.

Two other reasons for this are equally important. The first is the political situation created by the National-Socialist revolution, and its effect in making things easy for Hauer does not need any more emphasis, as it is adequately stressed by Hauer himself in the articles which follow. The second is the present position of Protestant religion and theology in Germany today. It is scarcely possible to deny that both Lutheran and Calvinist theology have assumed a reactionary form and made a conscious return to the forms and expressions of the Reformation period. Although the typical Lutheran theologian is still compelled to work with scientific methods in Biblical investigation, he seems to have turned his back on the more general conclusions of criticism. Lutheran theology is de-

termined at all costs to be Biblical and to raise the Protestant Fathers to a position only a little lower than that occupied by Saint Thomas in Roman Catholic theology. To English minds, some of the criticisms made of Christianity by Hauer seem to be dealing merely with ghosts of the past. But it is precisely these, to us dead forms, that German Protestantism is seeking to revivify. The churches of North Germany are empty, perhaps because their worship and theology seem barren; in South Germany they are often full, but the crowds which sometimes throng them are made up only to a very small extent by representatives of educated youth. Hauer has not too difficult a task in persuading this section of the community that it may safely leave the essentially alien thought of the Church on one side; in very many cases it has already done so, long ago, and the heroic stand which the Confessional Churches have made against the encroachments of the State has not brought many of the young people over to its side; for the youth of Germany is, in the first place, National-Socialist, and, in the second or a much later place, Christian—if it is Christian at all.

Before the Great War, German Christianity was predominantly liberal; that is, it tried to combine the spirit of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment with the legacy of the past. But

liberalism in every form, whether political or religious, is dead in Germany today, and the reaction against it in religion, as in everything else, has been as violent as only reactions in Germany can be. It is not too much to say that if a new and vital form of liberal Christianity had arisen to capture the allegiance of postwar youth, Neo-Paganism in Germany would have had small chance of success.

The Plan of the Book

So short a book as this does not, of course, make it possible to see all sides and aspects of the conflict which is raging at present in Germany between Christianity and the new religion. But it touches on all the cardinal points at issue, and the three protagonists have their say. In the first place Hauer states his case. In his first article, written especially for foreign readers, he describes the origin and sketches the aims of his movement. In his second, which is in form a lecture delivered to an audience of ten thousand in the Berlin Sport Palace in April, 1935, he sets forth in outline his criticisms of Christianity and his positive contribution to religious thought, together with various suggestions for the reform of education in Germany, etc. In his third article, which is an extract from his recent book, *A German View of God*,

he defines his attitude to Christianity in general and to Jesus Christ in particular.

Heim's article is devoted to two main objects: the exposure of a serious weakness in Hauer's view of moral responsibility, and the elucidation of the fundamental point of difference between the German Faith Movement and Protestant Christianity. His insistence on the completeness of God's transcendence and the corruptness of human nature is strongly marked throughout. The article does not claim to give the complete case against Hauer, but it does emphasize the difference between Hauer's and the Christian idea of God, and denies that man is capable of goodness without the help of God.

Lastly comes the contribution of Karl Adam, from the Roman-Catholic standpoint. This is a public lecture delivered in Tübingen in the spring of 1935 and subsequently published in pamphlet form. Adam expressly refuses to be drawn into the methods of controversy, and therefore does not deal in detail with the points raised by Hauer. His intention is to set forth in positive form the Roman doctrine on the issues raised by the appearance of the new movement. He consequently discusses at some length the character and person of Jesus and his relationship to the needs and aspirations of the present day, especially in reference to the new

Nationalism; for Hauer claims that Jesus has no message and no relevance to modern Germany. Then, in view of Hauer's attempt to identify God with the world and its ideas, Adam discusses the relation of God, the Creator, to his world; and, finally, the Roman view of human nature is expounded in relation both to Hauer's optimism and Lutheran pessimism.

For permission to translate material we are greatly indebted to the German publishers, Karl Gutbrod of Stuttgart, J. C. B. Mohr of Tübingen, and P. Haas & Co., of Augsburg.

The Worship of the German Faith Movement

A good test of a religious movement is its worship, and it is worth while giving a personal impression of the service which in the Faith Movement fills the place of confirmation in the Christian Churches.

It was held on a summer Sunday morning in the beautiful garden of Professor Hauer, with its magnificent view over the valley of the Neckar, in the midst of sprouting fruit trees and vines—an ideal background for the rites of a movement of German Faith. The ceremony was definitely a religious and spiritual experience. An odd note might be struck by an occasional phrase in a hymn, such as the expression

of undying loyalty to Hitler. Prayer might be conspicuous by its absence. But the music, German classical music played by an invisible quartet, and the sermon to the catechumens by Professor Hauer, were very impressive.

Prospects of the Movement

The reader, after finishing this book, will have at least some opportunity of deciding on the merits of the new movement. And he will also no doubt have his own view as to whether Christianity in Germany has produced a worthy answer to its rival. It is probable that many parts of the answer will strike the English reader as odd in the extreme, and that many of the criticisms leveled by Hauer against Christianity have been rendered obsolete long ago in Christianity as we know it.

If the German Faith Movement had first appeared in England, or America, the reply would have been quite different; there would have been, for instance, little or no attempt to deny Hauer's doctrine of God's immanence in the world and in personality. But it does not follow from this, as both Hauer and his opponents seem to think that it does, that God is wholly and only immanent. Most of our theologians would probably hold that God is both immanent and transcendent, and that the problem of philo-

sophical theology is to reconcile the two things. Hauer and Heim both assume that only one of them can be true.

Hauer's whole position rests on the assumption, which he takes to be proved, that an individual's religion is determined for him by his race and stock, and that so long as he follows the peculiar religious instincts of his own race, he achieves as much knowledge of God as is possible for him. But this assumption seems to be quite illegitimate, and educated opinion in America and England, whether Christian or not, would certainly regard it as nonsensical to say that Jesus of Nazareth can contribute nothing to our spiritual development because he was a Jew. Christianity, as a matter of history, has always made more appeal to, and had more effect on Aryan than on Semitic races. Moreover, among civilized nations it would scarcely be possible to find one whose predominant culture and religion are impeccably and completely Aryan: how, then, is it possible to prove that the real culture and religion of an Aryan must be exclusively Aryan? To purify German life from everything non-Aryan is a hopeless task in any case.

It need hardly be pointed out that Christianity, as we know it, is not purely Semitic, for in it have already met and mingled long ago a

very large number of Greek as well as Hebrew elements. Therefore, even on Hauer's own line of reasoning, Christianity cannot be wholly false even for the German.

In the end, a religion must stand or fall by two things: its doctrine of the nature and character of God, and its treatment of the problem of evil. It is not unfair to Hauer to say that he definitely avoids the former issue; for he openly refuses to state any doctrine of God, and professes agnosticism on all ultimate questions. "We worship the God who is revealed to us by our native genius, and other nations do the same," he says; "it is impossible to know what God is really like, or to say anything about his ultimate nature and character at all!" It is difficult to resist the conclusion that he evades the problem of evil as well; for evil, in his description of it, ceases to be evil in any sense which corresponds to the moral consciousness of civilized man, for the conception of duty has vanished, and we are left only with the vague feeling that we are controlled by the forces of destiny and yet called upon to live a heroic life. And if we fall short of the heroic ideal, we are not promised any assistance in the recovery of our self-respect, except an exhortation to strengthen that cats-paw of destiny which, for the sake of convenience, we call our will.

It may be thought that, in view of these inherent weaknesses, Hauer's movement has little chance of success. But the objections that we have mentioned would not necessarily appear in the same light to a German student of these problems; and conditions, political, social, and religious, are so favorable at the moment for the spread of such ideas, that his popularity and success during the next few years seem assured. It should be added that Hauer's movement, although the largest, is not the only movement with similar aims, and that at the moment these movements do not offer a united front; when they begin to do this, obviously their chances will be very greatly enlarged. But in any case it is difficult to see how any successes that they may win can be permanent. It is to be hoped that German Christianity will not disdain the lessons that Hauer has to teach, and will fill in the gaps which he has revealed in its own message.

Biographical Notes on the Authors

Wilhelm Hauer was born in a village in Württemberg, South Germany, and was attracted in early life toward the more pietistic section of the Protestant Church. He went as a young man to the missionary college in Basel, and later to India as a missionary. There he was noted for his mastery of Indian ideas and his

skill in getting into contact with educated Indians; and, in order that he might become in due course the head of a Christian college, he was sent to Oxford to undergo a further period of training. He became a member of Mansfield College, and a year later won an open exhibition to Jesus College. He took a First in "Greats" in 1914, and was still in England when the Great War broke out. Later he was pastor of congregations in Frankfurt and Strassburg, but was gradually moving away from the Christian position. He eventually formed a sect of "free" Christians, and after he had to all intents and purposes forsaken Christianity altogether, he became professor in the University of Tübingen, where he still is. His lectures on "Race and Religion" and kindred subjects have drawn very large crowds and create a good deal of controversy.

Karl Heim was also born in Württemberg, in 1874, and was for three years the secretary of the German equivalent of the Student Christian Movement. Since 1907 he has held successive posts in the Universities of Halle, Münster, and Tübingen, and he has been professor in the last-named place since 1920. Three of his books have already appeared in English under the titles of *The New Divine Order; God Transcendent,* and *The Church of Christ*

and the Problems of the Day, and in Tübingen his lectures attract an audience which is commonly reputed to be larger than that of any other theological professor in Germany.

Karl Adam, born at Pursruck, Bavaria, in 1876, ranks second to none among German Catholic theologians and has made special contributions to the study of Saint Augustine. Ordained in 1900, he served for some years as a parish priest, but was soon called to academic positions, first in München and later in Strassburg. Since 1919 he has been professor of Dogmatic Theology in the Catholic faculty in Tübingen. He has a wide public by reason of his powers as an apologete and propagandist, and two of his books have appeared in English under the titles of *Catholicism* and *The Son of Man*.

Origin of the German Faith Movement

An Alien or a German Faith?

The Semitic Character of Christianity

WILHELM HAUER

THE ORIGIN OF THE GERMAN FAITH MOVEMENT

The German Faith Movement is as old as German history. What today is styled the German Faith Movement is only a phase of the conflict between native faith and a Christianity which has come down to us from an alien source. And the range of this conflict extends beyond the boundaries of Germany. For the whole conflict of the German spirit with Christianity, since the latter's invasion of the Teutonic area, is in its turn merely a phase of the conflict of the Indo-Germanic spirit with the spirit of the Near-Eastern Semitic world, which in the form of the Christianity of the first centuries and of the Middle Ages allied itself with Rome. The struggle of these two worlds with one another extends over thousands of years, and all the West Indo-Germanic countries have been in a special sense drawn into it. In every single one of these countries the revolt of the Indo-Germanic spirit against Christianity, which is Near-Eastern, Semitic, and Roman, has made itself felt. The "Secularist" movement in France falls undoubtedly in this category.

The German Faith Movement, which was

founded in Eisenach in July, 1933, did not receive its name because we thought that there was a German God in contradistinction to the God of other nations; the name was intended to express the fact that we felt the constraining power of a Faith Movement springing out of the specific German nature, and the urge to set it over against Christianity, whose founder and standard documents have reached us from a different racial and cultural area. The word "German" was not intended to mark off this movement from the other West Indo-Germanic nations. The distinguishing feature of the Faith Movement was, rather, to be the normative function assigned to moral forces which spring immediately from the nature of the German soul. We could just as easily have called it the "Nordic-Teutonic" Faith Movement. As I am convinced that the same fundamental forces in religion and morals are operative in the other West Indo-Germanic nations as well, I chose at first the title "Indo-Germanic." But this sounded too academic, and did not fit the spiritual situation; so it was changed to "German." For this word evoked a far more immediate response from the hearts of those who had been gripped by the National-Socialist revolution. The French or English translation of the name should, therefore, never be "*Mouvement*

allemand de foi," or "German Faith Movement."[1] The adjectives which come nearest to what is meant are "*germanique*," and "Germanic," so long as it is borne in mind that what is in view is a particular expression of the Indo-Germanic spirit, with its storm-center in Germany. Thus the German Faith Movement can never be a hindrance to international understanding—quite the reverse. It represents, among other things, a thoroughgoing attempt to bring out more and more clearly, and to render effective, the close connection that exists between all the West Indo-Germanic nations in their innermost nature.

The new phase of the German Faith Movement which began with the meeting in Eisenach in July, 1933, must be understood in close relation with the national movement which led to the formation of the Third Empire.[2] Like the latter, the German Faith Movement is an eruption from the biological and spiritual depths

[1] The term "German Faith Movement" has become so common in England and America that it seemed impossible to change it in this book, but it is to be hoped that Hauer's caveat will be carefully noticed.—TRANS.

[2] We have adopted this translation throughout for "das dritte Reich," but there is no real equivalent; the word "Reich" sums up for the German all that is meant by the union of the German states under one rule and Germany's self-expression as a nation. The First Empire was the Holy Roman Empire; the second, the regime instituted in 1871 and ending in 1918; the third, the National-Socialist State set up in 1933. This, at least, is the official view at present.—TRANS.

of the German nation. National movements are among the things which are subject to the rhythm of all organic life, in which the ebb and flow of creative powers alternate. The laws of this rhythm, which are fulfilled by vast age-long swings of the pendulum, are unknown to us. According to our view they are the will of eternal formative forces, which mold ever and again the whole life of a nation. This will is all-embracing, and dwells in the deeps, and from age to age it takes fresh hold of a nation in all that it is and is about to be. It was therefore inevitable that the political movement in the German nation should be closely bound up with a philosophical attitude, should, in fact, arise from it. For a philosophy is, in the end, a vision of new purposes and the knowledge of the laws and forces out of which these spring and through which they can be realized. Thus a new religious movement as well as a political one was bound to be born at this time. (That is to say, it had been *born* long before, but the revolution brought it into the clear light of day.) Throughout the nineteenth century, and during the first third of the twentieth, essays at a native religion were constantly appearing, and men like Arndt, Lagarde, and in a certain sense Nietzsche, put forward the demand that religion and morals should be molded according

to the essential German nature. But the formation of small societies was all that resulted, and a real national movement did not arise. The novel thing about the German Faith Movement is that it is sweeping through the entire nation—although its numbers, in proportion to the sixty million Germans, are still very small.

It was a particular turn of events that drove all those who were fighting for a native German religion to unite themselves under my leadership for a common defense. Point 24 of the program of the National-Socialist Party states that the party as such stands for positive Christianity. When National-Socialism came into power, the representatives of the Christian Churches attempted to make use of this item in the party program, and adopted every device to force non-Christian Germans back into the Churches. Tens of thousands of Germans, who were non-Christians by religious conviction, were in this way dragooned into entering the Churches once again and into acting against their conscience.[3] Those of us who could no longer profess Christianity, because its doctrines had ceased to be an inner reality, had to protect ourselves against this use of force. Just like the Christians, we based our case on Point 24, the first

[3] We have been unable to find any other evidence for or against this statement.—TRANS.

paragraph of which runs: "We demand freedom for all religious confessions within the State, so long as they do not imperil its existence or offend against the moral feeling of the race." We were convinced that, despite its profession of positive Christianity, it was not the intention of the National-Socialist State that anyone should be forced into a philosophy against his personal conviction, and that the Leader would repudiate such conduct as soon as he heard of it. Count Reventlow and I put our case before the Leader's Deputy, Reichsminister Hess. As we had expected, he knew nothing of these violent proceedings, and prohibited them at once by a decree of October 13, 1933, as follows: "No National-Socialist may suffer any detriment on the ground that he does not profess any particular faith or confession, or on the ground that he does not make any religious profession at all. Each man's faith is his own affair, for which he answers to his own conscience alone. Compulsion may not be brought to bear in matters of conscience." This decree is the Magna Carta of religious freedom in the Third Empire, and guarantees it to everyone whose conduct does not endanger the State. The representatives of Christianity wished to follow anew, even in the Third Empire, in the misguided footsteps of Charlemagne. But that path has now been

blocked once and for all. We must look upon it as a great achievement on the part of the Leader of a totalitarian State, that he has combined complete liberty in questions of religion and conscience with the totalitarian claims of the State. The German Faith Movement was the occasion for the promulgation of this charter of freedom in the Third Empire. It claims, therefore, that it is the champion of this inalienable right of all Indo-Germanic peoples, and that it has taken up its stand at a moment which is decisive for German and European history. But the struggle which the German Faith Movement entered upon in self-defense has other and deeply rooted, *positive* grounds. Therefore the defensive struggle very soon became an offensive struggle for a philosophy and a religion which was German, in contrast to Christian credalism, which is alien, ecclesiastical and dogmatic.

Let me now guard against an error which is particularly prevalent abroad. It is commonly supposed that we are anxious to restore the ancient paganism of the Teutonic tribes. A fantastic story about a marriage ceremony which I am supposed to have conducted has become current in the press all over the world. According to this story, I took the service, to the accompaniment of old pagan proverbs and hymns, clad in a bearskin or deerskin, and wearing a

boar's head helmet. This story is pure imagination; the only foundation for it is the fact that I held a very simple marriage service for a young couple, with music, folk-songs, German poems and proverbs, instead of the usual church wedding. The whole thing had nothing whatever to do with the worship of Wotan or Freya. The reason for the mistaken view that we are attempting to reintroduce the worship of the ancient deities, in so far as it is not simply the desire to discredit us, is just this: several of the earlier societies attempted to restore to a place of honor the heritage of ancient Teutonic and Nordic religion, and they often did it in a very romantic, even fantastic, manner. But such attempts are merely the accompanying phenomena which arise in the case of all great movements; they are mere caricatures of the real thing, and one is not entitled to judge the whole movement by them. We have no intention of awakening the old gods to life; we know perfectly well that they will never emerge from their twilight, and that each new age must mold its own religious forms. If we mention here and there the old Teutonic deities, they serve only as symbols, just as the classical deities have been used as symbols in art and poetry since the Renaissance; and the reason is the same in both cases: they express ideals which we feel to be

essentially akin to us. The figures of the Edda we feel to be spirit of our spirit, nature of our nature. Therefore we gladly absorb ourselves in these ancient poems, the creations of the Nordic spirit, for we feel that they have been born from the same racial soul from which spring our own deepest moral and religious impulses. The figures in these poems are truly nearer to us than the figures of the Old Testament, the offspring of so different a racial character. But we should have to regard prayers to Wotan, or hymns and sacrifices to Thor, as a parody of German Faith. What we mean by German Faith is something very near to the present; it is an offspring of today, and adapted to today. At the same time we are convinced that this faith in its fundamental nature is as old as the Nordic soul, just as much as we are convinced that its fundamental nature is diametrically opposed to Christian credalism with its Oriental bondage to dogma.

AN ALIEN OR A GERMAN FAITH?

German Men, German Women and German Youth!

We are all convinced that the German Revolution is an eruption from the productive deeps of the nation, a creative movement of the whole people, which is gradually taking possession of one sphere of life after another. The German Faith Movement can be understood only in connection with that eruption, which has stirred into life, within the nation, those primal forces whose nature is symbolized by the words, Blood, Soil, Empire. We are not a little band of crazed sectaries clamoring for existence; we are a national movement. We, who have united ourselves as comrades in arms, know that we are only the shock troops, and that behind us is advancing a broad front drawn from every section of the nation. We are a beginning, an eruption; and many of the charges which are brought against the German Faith Movement arise from that very fact. But we march forward unflinching, in the knowledge that behind us that broad front is pressing on, the multitude of those who wish to cast their life in a religious mold, and are seeking a German faith.

But the German Faith Movement has other connections also, which lead us back into the spiritual history of the Teutonic peoples. The modern German Faith Movement is only one phase of that conflict between German and alien faith, which has been waged through more than a thousand years of German history. I will mention merely two or three focal points in this conflict, separated by centuries. Resistance to an alien faith raised its head for the first time at the attempt to evangelize the Teutonic tribes, and just in those regions where Teutonic customs and Teutonic faith were still alive; that is, among the Saxons, the Northmen, the Swabians, the Bavarians and the Thüringians—for in those areas native genius had not yet been crushed by an alien world. Those Teutons clearly grasped the fact that something was invading them which was dangerous to their genius, and they offered a brave and strenuous opposition to the alien faith—despite the number of those who deserted to it under compulsion or of their own free will.

A second focal point is the life and teaching of Eckhart. Eckhart is one of the greatest of the essentially German masters of life and thought. Soon after Christianity had achieved external success, he won an inward victory over the alien, through the strength of his German nature—however much he still moved within

the sphere of Christian imagery and thought-forms, and however little he was conscious of the fact that he really was not a Christian at all.

The third of the focal points is the German Reformation, for in one of its aspects it was the struggle of the German nature against Rome.

The way in which the German nature found its true expression at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from the period of the Enlightenment to that of the great dramatists, demonstrated for the first time to the nation and to the whole world that an alien faith and the German genius stand in fundamental opposition to one another. Frederick the Great, Goethe and Schiller, Fichte, Kleist and Hebbel were the outstanding figures until the revolt of the German from Christianity reached its culmination in Nietzsche.

Anyone who wishes to understand the innermost meaning of the modern German Faith Movement must see it in the context of the age-long struggle of the German genius for self-expression. We are a movement which is rooted in the centuries of the past, and which points forward to the centuries of the future. The vitality of the German genius has persisted without intermission till the present day, and will persist without intermission so long as German blood pulses in German veins.

I must first of all defend myself against the reproach often made against us, that we are disturbing the unity of Germany. We belong to the number of those Germans to whom nothing is more sacred than the unity of Germany, and we are ready to sacrifice everything for it. But one thing we will not do: we will not betray the German genius, for we know that thereby we should betray the nation and the empire. That is why we had to take the field, in a decisive moment of German history, to do battle for the German genius. If we had not obeyed this imperative call, we should have offended against the vital energy of the German nation. The reproach can never be brought against *us* that we have destroyed the unity of the German nation. I myself after the success of the German revolution made the attempt to guarantee the future unity of the Church. . . . At that time I addressed an open letter to the national administration of the German Christian Faith Movement, and to the administration of the Evangelical Church, in which I put forward the suggestion that all non-Catholic Germans should form one national religious fellowship. I was forced to assume from the start that the Catholic Church would not and could not participate. But I cherished the hope that it would be possible to gather at least the Protestant section of

the nation, if they were real Germans, into one great fellowship, in which there would be room both for those whose faith still finds expression in the Christian creeds, and for those who profess a German faith. I looked forward, in fact, to one great national religious fellowship, based on Protestant principles. But this hope was shattered by the Christians. We were expelled as unbelievers from the fellowship of the faithful. I am not ashamed of having made this last attempt, of having put my faith in one Church, to be a home for all German believers who would not bow to Rome. But the way in which my call was answered made it clear to me that there is an unbridgeable gulf between Christian credalism, of whatever variety, and the German genius. The Church has left the nation, not the nation the Church. It was only when this bitter realization came home to me that I drew the conclusion which I could no longer escape, and severed myself finally from the Church. I had long before been forced to emancipate myself inwardly from the Christian religion.

This involved adopting the watchword: To battle for a German Faith! Would those who shared my faith have found a home at all, if we had not made the attempt to band ourselves together? And we could only band ourselves

together by declaring war on a religion which claimed to possess the one and only way to God and repudiated other people as unbelievers.

We have no complaint to make against the Christians, when they declare that it is their task to preach the gospel to the whole nation, so long as they confine themselves to preaching the gospel and do not meddle in other matters. But these preachers of the gospel have no right to inform us that we must hold our tongues because we have no faith. We put forward the claim likewise that we have received from God a message to preach. We will allow no one to deprive us of our commission, least of all a Christian. Our faith is not disposed of as soon as someone defames it or pronounces us infidel. We speak, live, and work because we are called. It has certainly not been easy for us at a time when all the national forces must be co-ordinated to spread among the German nation this battle cry for a German faith. But for the sake of the nation we had no choice. The way to the true unity of the nation will not be found by cowardly silence or by treading softly, but by a courageous struggle for the things that matter. It is our conviction that the unity of Germany is not a fragile vessel over which we must keep anxious watch and ward, but a reality

which must be fought for and won with our life's blood.

It has been the fate of the German nation, in all the great epochs of its history, to live through a struggle for its faith and its outlook on the world. That is its commission in the world. That commission it must fulfill. We are of the opinion that by taking the field we have shown the German nation the way to true unity, through an honorable and fair contest, carried on by the best elements in the German nation, on behalf of truth and of that inner Reality which should bear us on and guide our steps. Good men and true will recognize one another if we fight on these terms. This is the way in which a lasting fellowship will be built up. The fight must be carried on fairly, as befits the German nature and as is worthy of that which is at stake —the holy of holies, faith, God himself, if I may utter that word here.

As soon as we lay down the conditions for such a fight we see at once the antithesis between an alien faith and the German genius. We of the German Faith stand in respect before every man of genuine religious convictions, and so before the sincere Christian. We do not deny the fact of his salvation. I know from personal experience that sincere Christians do exist, and I am grateful that my life has been so guided

that I have known men who, because of their Christianity and in spite of it, were characters to whom I could look up, men with generous hearts that burned with love of the German nation. I repeat, I am grateful that I have known such Christians, and that my knowledge of Christianity is not derived only from an experience of its conflict with those of other faiths; for in that conflict it reveals itself in such a light that one is driven to despair of it. We have no intention of making genuine Christians question their Christianity, for it has always been the German way to let every man's religious belief alone. The Norsemen, before the introduction of Christianity, held the same view. When the Christian king Olaf, of Norway, Tryagvis' son, demanded of the proud queen Sigrid, whose hand he sought in marriage, that she should allow herself to be baptized and accept the Christian faith, she answered: "I will never surrender the ancient faith which I and all my kinsfolk had before me. And I in my turn will not dispute with you, if you go on believing in the God who is well-pleasing to you." That is the Nordic, the Teutonic way. But, the story goes on, King Olaf waxed very wroth and cried in his rage, "How could I think of marrying you, you heathen bitch!" and struck her in the face with his gauntlet. Olaf was a Christian.

That Nordic attitude of freedom and generosity toward those of other faiths, rooted as it is in personal religious certainty, is through and through characteristic of all those who have obeyed the law of their nature, uninfluenced by Christianity. And the saying of Frederick the Great, that in his country everyone "could choose his own path to blessedness," breathes the same spirit as the declaration of the Leader's Deputy[1] for freedom of faith and conscience. It is the same Teutonic way which Christianity with its different attitude was not able to overcome.

For what is the attitude which Christianity takes up to those of other faiths? We have only to think of the way in which the Christians are carrying on the fight against the German Faith Movement, and especially against me personally. I should never have believed that Germans who asserted that they were fighting for their faith could have been so full of ill will and heartlessness, so ready and willing to distort and calumniate, as these have shown themselves to be in the course of this conflict. But even if we overlook the darker side of the Christians' defense of their faith, and fix our attention solely on those who are ready to fight honorably according to the German tradition, we come

[1] V. Supra p. 32.

up against a spirit which cannot lead to freedom and generosity in religion. In the end, for these Christians too, those of other faiths are heretics, or worse, reprobate and damned, if they do not get converted to Christ. That is the genius of Christianity, which is incapable of letting go one iota of its credalism. For that spirit is rooted in the very nature of Christianity. It claims to possess the absolute truth, and with this claim is bound up the idea that men can only achieve salvation in one way, through Christ, and that it must send to the stake those whose faith and life do not conform, or pray for them till they quit the error of their ways for the kingdom of God. Of course there is a difference between sending men to the stake and praying for them. But the attitude which lies behind both is much the same at bottom. In both cases the whole stress is laid on forcibly rescuing the man of another faith from the peril of hellfire, into which the pursuit of his own path would inevitably plunge him. It is the attitude which in some form or other must necessarily grow out of religious intolerance. If this attitude and the conviction on which it is based, that there is only one road to truth and one way to God, form an inalienable characteristic of Christianity, then Christianity is fundamentally opposed to the German genius.

For this attitude and this conviction have never been and can never be part of the German genius. We are faced with a choice between an alien and a German faith. The German nature itself will decide the issue. It alone will declare the fundamental will of the German nation; and we can well afford to leave the decision to that court.

I will not dilate on all the miseries which have been brought upon Germany through the control exerted by the various credal organizations —conversions at the point of the sword, the Inquisition, the trials of witches, the perpetual heresy-hunts which have lasted till the present day. But one thing must not be left unsaid. The chaos of spirit and confusion of judgment produced by this alien faith made it possible for representatives of Christianity, even in the Third Empire, to venture on the attempt, under the cry of "Positive Christianity," to drive men by every sort of pressure back into the fold of the Church. And this process went on till the declaration of Rudolf Hess put an end to it. And much of what happens here and there under a genteel surface in the struggle for a native German faith can be traced back to the confusion of spirit foisted on the German nation by an alien faith with its false attitude to those of other faiths. We of the German Faith Movement see

a great task before us, to assist in educating the German nation to an attitude which corresponds with its genius. But it will require several decades to get rid of all the effects of this Christian credalism, and for the German spirit completely to find its feet again. Then and only then will it be possible to do battle for one's faith and outlook on the world in a way worthy of the German genius. Meanwhile, inspired by our German Faith, we can do no more than give a practical example of fair play in such a fight, in the hope that an example will be more effective than mere exhortations. We can and must add, however, that it is not the Christians who have shown the German people how to carry on a worthy contest in matters of faith, but we, who are anathematized as unbelievers.

The reason for our attitude of freedom and generosity to those of other faiths is no superficial one. It is bound up with our sense of personal religious certainty, with our experience that the religious life of the believer has its source in the eternal deeps of his own personality. And we who hold the German Faith are convinced that men, and especially the Germans, have the capacity for religious independence, since it is true that everyone has an immediate relation to God, is, in fact, in the depths of

his heart one with the eternal Ground of the world.

That is why we reject the whole conception of mediation, whether through a sacred person, a sacred book, or a sacred rite. We do not in any way desire to deprive those who still need that sort of thing, of any of their aids to faith. They must live their own religious life. But *we* are compelled to reject such things, not indeed because we deny the existence of God or of the eternal powers which govern life, but because we have found from experience that it is possible to have immediate contact with those powers. In taking up this position, we in no sense deny significance to religious leaders. Germany has been richly endowed with them throughout the course of its history. But the office of the leader is to help Man to come to himself, to reach that inner core of his being in which the Eternal reveals itself.

We are able to approach men of other faiths with the generous freedom which has always signalized the Teutonic and German genius, just because we base the idea of religious independence—which we oppose to that of mediation—on the immediate relation of men to God; that is, on the conviction that there is a divine spark in man which can be extinguished neither by sin nor by death. Out of this religious ex-

perience arises the recognition that the religious destiny of individuals is as varied as their personal yearning. It is a true saying which an ancient sage puts into the mouth of the Deity: "According as a man seek refuge in me, so shall I also give myself to him." Such was German, Teutonic, Indo-Germanic teaching and experience for thousands of years.

This faith in the immediacy of human access to God, and in the divine spark in man, must not be confused with a superficial belief in the moral perfection of humanity. Our opponents are very fond of reproaching us with plainly ignoring the sin and tragedy of life. One of them goes so far as to write that I must have had a very easy life, to hold a belief like mine. Does he not realize that it is just through sin and tragedy that a man fights his way to an affirmation of life? For it is sin and tragedy that assist us to become in the truest sense what we are. We know a great deal about sin and tragedy, only we do not, like Christianity, ascribe them to original sin; on the contrary, we believe that tragedy is one of the laws of the world. We are here to become heroes along the path of adversity, and along the path too of our sin, for which we are responsible and with which we must come to terms. We are thereby lifted above the level of sin and tragedy, and in the

silence of our hearts can make the great affirmation.

I think I have made it clear that our concern is with religion. What we have said is not the result of prolonged excogitation or of wide reading; it is wholly a matter of personal experience. Do our opponents imagine that there is no inward momentum, no spiritual power, needed to maintain opposition to a religious world which claims thousands of years for its own? It will surely not again be necessary for me to refute the charge that we are an atheistic movement. Anyone who does not grasp that we are not an atheistic movement, but a movement of believers, must have a heart of stone. I ask our opponents to see us as we are—and not in the light in which they would like to see us, in order to dispose of us more easily. A man who defames his opponent must have a bad conscience and a poor confidence in his own cause. We are assured of the success of our movement, because its strength lies in the essential being of the German nation.

I should like in passing to deal with a reproach, often made against us, that we are a purely academic movement—just because, by some dispensation of Providence, a professor stands at its head. Firstly in that regard: Is it not just feasible that even a professor could

have a brain wave, and find the right road for once? And, secondly, most of those who reproach us with being a movement of professors are professors themselves. One of them has recently written against me in the "Reichsbote," maintaining that there is no real power to be seen in the German Faith Movement. All I can say to him is that he is too blind to see realities. Another of them has read my book, *A German View of God*, and can find nothing in it but a dozen "isms." If this is not professorial pedantry and academic religiosity, I have no idea where to look for it! Does he think he has disposed of a living man when he has shut him up in a cage of "isms," and that he has rendered him as harmless as a lion behind bars of iron? The lion can still growl and even roar from time to time, they admit, but he can be inspected in perfect safety, of course through the professorial spectacles—for my noble critics were wearing out their eyes with study, while I was earning my daily bread in the sweat of my brow, and drawing my strength from my mother-earth. We have not got our faith from books, or from sacred scriptures (which in the case of many of my critics have to make up for the lack of a living faith), but from personal experience. This is shown by the fact that it is not the mass of intellectuals which is stream-

ing over to us, but multitudes of ordinary people, who are not looking for the theological pedantries of professors, but for Life. I should like to compare my critics with soldiers shooting at a dummy, while the real enemy continues his advance unnoticed. He may be well on the way to his objective while they are still fighting their mock-battle. I should like to give these people the serious advice to take us seriously. They will discover that they have to deal with a spiritual force and not with a mere flight of fancy. Those who reproach us with devising a religion in our study chairs do nothing themselves but spend the whole day over their books. But I really cannot trouble myself any further with these people, with whom discussion is as futile as they are themselves.

Our concern is with religion. And in the end the question comes to this: Where does God meet us? Or, as Count Reventlow says, Where is God?

Where is the reality in and through which we can have experience of God? The answer of Christianity is simple: in Jesus Christ, in the Bible, in Church and sacrament. But it has not been our experience that we there came into our closest contact with the eternal powers. We

have been permitted to meet them in the realities of life, in history, in our own destiny, that is, in the things of immediate experience and in the deeps of our own soul. We regard the attempt to limit our meeting with God to a particular area, indeed, to a particular point in time and space, as the expression of a genius alien to us. God meets us in unmediated reality, in the moment in which we stand, in the spot where destiny has placed us in order that we may master life there. We believe in God's immanence in the world and therefore in his presence in history. God has not revealed himself only in the past, certainly not only in a Chosen People in a far-off land; he reveals himself everywhere in every great event, and especially when nations are molded by the achievements of great leaders. We believe that God has laid a great task on our nation, and that he has therefore revealed himself specially in its history and will continue to do so. In that history we trace the will of the Eternal. God meets us in the realities of the world, of our German world, in such fashion that we cannot escape him unless we live a superficial life. We do not want to fasten our gaze on the past, but on the reality of the present moment. Our piety is a faith in the realities of this world, in contrast to the otherworldly piety of Christianity.

We must consider for a moment an important characteristic of the religious history of Germany. Every great epoch in the religious history of the world has a particular focus where God reveals himself to men, the point (as it were) at which the divine spark is kindled afresh. Once upon a time that focus may have been the person of Jesus and the community of believers, but for us today it is the nation and German history. This fact is indicative of a turning point, perhaps the end of a millennium, in the religion of the German zone. That the nation and history should have come to occupy the center of the stage, as they have done today, is a new thing and for us a divine event. It leads us to believe that eternal reality purposes to meet us afresh, and to do so in the being and life of the nation to which we belong.

Out of this knowledge arises our religious attitude to the German nation and to the Third Empire. Here is the religious foundation of our positive acceptance of them. Why should any other history be holier to us and speak to us more of God than German history? The victory of Arminius over the Romans is to us a divine event, a revelation of the Eternal, and it stirs our heart more powerfully than the swallowing up of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. Why should the disaster which overtook them

be sacred history, and the victory of Arminius merely a secular event? We want the German people to regard its history and territory with religious devotion. Every man should have the sort of sacred history that suits his genius, and we desire to injure no man's sanctities; but we have the right to call our own history sacred. Thus the German Revolution is for us an event born of the nation's primal will, an event in which eternal powers are revealing themselves by the accomplishment of newer and greater things. It is once again our experience that an urge, which is deep in the blood of the German people, is mounting to the surface and driving us on to the pursuit of new ideals. We know of nothing which so challenges our devotion as this divine movement. We can see God advancing over German soil, seeking his instruments and, in spite of all opposition, molding events according to his purpose.

That is why German history is our sacred history, why Germany is our holy land; that is why our holy mountains are within the sound of German streams and German forests. That is why, when the beacons flare on these, our hills, our hearts are drawn up to the eternal spaces whence the light descends on the great figures of our nation's history. But let no one tell us that this is an apotheosis of the earthly. We

are aware of the dubiousness of the earthly, but we may nevertheless experience in it the presence of God, and that inspires our devotion and awakens our faith.

Our sacraments too must arise out of this reality. For us, national festivals are not only a ceremonial accompaniment of political events, requiring to receive the blessing of the Church before they obtain their religious content; they are in themselves the religious consecration of politics. Thus our sacraments grow up out of the reality in which we live. When we take a newborn child into our arms, as the bearer of our ancient racial heritage, we come face to face with the struggles, defeats, and victories of our forefathers, all their aims and purposes; and when we receive the child into the fellowship of the family and the tribe, with a form of words which is part of the nation's heritage, we are not aping a Christian custom, but molding a sacrament out of the reality in which we live. In the same way our marriage rite is bound up with the reality of the love of man and woman, which is sacred to us, and with the task which is given them on earth of being creative members of the national community. Such rites existed in German lands, long before the Church came to replenish these earthly realities with a divine grace infused from without.

Such rites were born from the essence of our nation, molded by its primal religious will. And here lies their obligatory character, which, from a national point of view, the Christian sacraments do not possess.

When people tell us that we are looking at history and reality simply as filled by God, as an exhibition of the divine, and closing our eyes to the dark side of the world and of our nation, to the treachery (for instance) which has been committed in it in the past—our answer is that we have been misunderstood. We are quite conscious of the dark and tragic side of the world. Nor do we belong to those who take an easy view of life. But it is the peculiarity of our faith that it is awakened by the very experience of tragedy, and that it discovers in and through it the presence of God in the world. When we quote the saying of Boehme, "You will find no book where there is more of the divine wisdom to read and ponder over than the green grass and the flowers of a meadow," one of our critics asks us whether we are unaware of the fact that stark cruelty reigns over the flowering meadow? What sort of a faith and philosophy is it, that sees nothing in the world but cruelty, because it contains strife, and does not realize that it is the strife and the tragedy of the world

that drive a man to those deep places where God meets him? It is because our experience of the world is what I have described, and no mere superficial optimism, that we are so unself-consciously at home in the world. We are content with this world, not because we have had an easy life and have seen only the brighter side of things, but because we know that even the darkest and bitterest experiences can be transfigured, if we see them through with dauntless courage. Nor do we look at our nation through the rosy spectacles of an unworldly idealism. Our eyes are open. We do *not* imagine that everything is as it should be. On the contrary, we realize that there is only too much which requires to be set in order by the primal creative will of the nation. But we also know that there exists in the German nation a living fellowship of believers, in whose hearts what I have called "the Ideal Will of the nation" declares itself. By the "Ideal Will of the nation" I mean that constructive will, that high national ideal which must be transformed into reality, and which, according to our conviction, has a divine origin and goes on calling and urging us till we obey it. That is what the presence of God in the nation means to us. With deep stirrings of heart we listen to that inner call in the great moments of our life, and let ourselves be made

ready to respond to the challenge. It is not the individual, the empirical self with its pitiful limitations, that has the right to obey the Ideal Will of the nation, but that sovereign will which springs from the primal depths in us. Thus it is in living fellowship and in response to the demands of each day, that we seek and find the divine will. That is the German genius.

The Ideal Will of the nation cannot be simply read off from a sacred book. When we were told that we had no laws which could be put alongside of the Ten Commandments, we did not quite know what was expected of us. Let our answer take the form of an example. We are all convinced that the primal will of our nation demands a healthy people; but how is it to be decided what promotes the health of the people? Is it to be from a sacred book, or through the attempt to discover in a living German fellowship, what is the demand, the eternal demand, of the nation? Take, for example, the sterilization law and the task of preventing the propagation of hereditary disease. Have the Christians, with the Bible, which should yield infallible guidance, in their hands, been able to find a unanimous solution? Some of them proclaim themselves in favor of this law, because they have been gripped by the reality, "nation," and its demands. Others find

themselves constrained to conform, but have an uncomfortable feeling that it is perhaps against the will of God. And a third section, for example, the whole Catholic Church, declares that the law is quite contrary to the divine will. It seems then, after all, that, despite the Ten Commandments and the lines of moral conduct so clearly laid down in the Bible, the Christians are in this instance groping in the dark. We of the German Faith have chosen another and a more certain path—the path of unconditional surrender to the highest good of the nation. With this end in view, it is out of the question that we should allow the great mass of hereditary disease to increase. The will of the nation is here the will of God, and we obey it.

The Ten Commandments and the moral principles laid down in Holy Scripture do not suffice for the building up of society. It is not that we are aiming at a morality on a lower level, in order to suit our comfort, but that before us lies the goal of a Teutonic, a German morality which will rank higher than that of Christianity. This morality is grounded in the nature of men and in their very blood. The great fundamental laws—reverence for life, for property, for what is real; courageous and unhesitating affirmation of life; the duty of sincerity; the sacredness of

parenthood—these four commandments are the universal foundations of a true morality. But we have something in addition which is promoted by the German genius, in the same way as German law so plainly is. For what is the origin of our legal system? Undoubtedly the German genius, the creative German nature. We are convinced that German law is a living reality, which varies in detail according to the phases of national development. But we are also convinced that in it the same genius, the same creative urge to righteousness, is everywhere operative. Specific circumstances call for specific attitudes on the part of the nation. Thus German law arises from the nation's primal will, which is personified in our outstanding figures. Could a legal system for the German nation possibly have been deduced from the sacred scriptures of the Old and New Testaments? Such an attempt would have led nowhere.

Is it not the same with religion? In this matter too there is a fundamental factor which is universally present wherever there is religion. The believer is laid hold of by that ultimate reality of which we have spoken. But the way in which he experiences it, and especially the way in which he speaks of it and expresses it in words and symbols, his reaction to it, depends on the disposition which he inherits in his blood.

And the nation whose religion does not find or refind its native expression becomes confused and diseased in spirit, and is doomed to disaster.

I am quite aware of the difficulties which are bound up with the question of race and religion. I have studied this question carefully for years, and I am not one of those who talk glibly about it. But the conviction has driven itself home to me with more and more clearness, that race and religion, blood and faith, are as intimately connected as race and law, blood and morality. That is why the German Faith Movement is fighting for the recognition of this fact, for only such a recognition can create the possibility of a successful resistance to the alien.

I should like to illustrate by a few examples how the different dispositions of men cause them to have entirely different religious experiences. One man experiences God as One who directs affairs from another world and intervenes in human life, who is throned as Judge above history and who executes vengeance till he is appeased by a blood-offering; another experiences God as reigning in the laws of the universe and in his own conscience. The God of the one precipitates into hell the sinner who has not obtained grace through the blood of Jesus; the God of the other receives the sinner into a redemptive and creative fellowship, if he bravely

faces his own guilt. Such differences in religious experience are grounded in the different dispositions of men. One man regards death as a punishment from God, charged with the divine wrath and leading him to hell unless he finds a mediator; to the other death is the primal law of life. One man holds that death has plunged life and the world into tragic confusion; the other that life would be a poor thing were it not for the majesty of death, that death is the supreme moment of life, a law ordained by the creative will of the Eternal to insure that life should have no end—such differences are not accidental, but the inevitable consequence of a man's disposition, the necessity of his blood. And when people inquire of us, what we, with our conception of death, have to say to a man on his death-bed, our answer is: what words can man utter in that moment when the eternal is speaking in majesty? The absence of words and a silent hand-clasp is the most sacred symbol possible in such an event. And there are really not so many Germans, as is generally supposed, who are unable to die without being comforted with a text. We know from the history of the Teutonic tribes, long before the coming of Christianity, that the Teuton knew how to face death unoppressed with the fear of what might come afterward. For what *can* come

afterward but that which is already here, the presence of the divine in all that is great?

Such is the Teutonic, the German genius, contrasted with an alien faith. When this way of faith and life has once found and consummated for itself a living fellowship within the German nation, a German morality will grow out of it which will call out the best in the German people, as no Christian morality has ever been able to do, because of its incompatibility with the nation's primal will. If this fellowship is not achieved, the German nation will have failed to respond to the call which has come to it once again in the German Revolution and the appearance of a great leader at a great moment of its history. This vital faith expresses our deepest longing, for we desire to act and not only to talk. If we do nothing but talk, we shall sin against the German nation. Of that we are aware, and our words are uttered with a sense of responsibility toward the nation; it shall judge us according to our deeds.

These few examples have made sufficiently clear where the great antitheses between an alien faith and the German genius are to be found. This is not the time to multiply such contrasts. The contrast is thoroughgoing, and will become more and more obvious as the German Faith finds the depths of its true self. The future will

prove what the past has made clear enough—that Christianity, of whatever stamp, cannot free itself from the form which is native to it, and which makes us recognize it as an alien faith.

The position which we take up leads us to make certain concrete demands. The moral and religious heritage of the German genius, which has been incarnated in our great sages and men of action, *must* express itself much more effectively in the life of the nation. And we must devise ways and means to achieve this result. Here we come up against the Protestant and Catholic schools. We are compelled by our moral and religious convictions to make certain definite demands. These schools are the clearest expression of the Christian credalism which we have characterized as anti-German. For in them each communion comes forward with the claim to possess the one and only truth and the only way to salvation. In this way our children are introduced to the conflict of faiths on their first day at school, and a yawning chasm begins to divide German hearts in the earliest days of youth. Therefore the German nation of today feels the Protestant and Catholic schools to be an unbearable yoke and the most deadly peril to the German will to unity. We want our children to experience together

first and foremost that they are Germans, that they are nourished by the German genius, that they are being introduced to the heritage of their forefathers and are to mold their lives unswervingly according to that model. We want to render unnecessary any further discussion of the nature of the German genius; we want it to issue from the coming generations like forked lightning and destroy all the forces of division. We demand national schools. This demand has been greeted with thunderous applause not only in this great meeting, but everywhere I have spoken on this subject throughout the land. The German nation has clearly proclaimed its will. Let no one tell us that violence is thus being done to others. If there are people in the nation who hold it to be their duty to bring up their children in a creed which makes the claim to possess the sole truth about God, they shall have the right to do so—but they must bear the responsibility for it themselves. And they shall teach and practice their credalism in the place where it belongs, that is, in their creed-bound conventicles. There they can instruct the children who want to come to them or are brought there by their parents—and not in the State institutions which are for the service of the nation and are paid for by it. We decisively reject and relentlessly combat the claim of the Church to

control education as the appointed guardian of German youth. The will of the German nation, rather than an antiquated tradition of the past, should determine who are to be in control of religious education.

The Church has forfeited its rights over the younger generation in Germany by the way in which it has used (or, rather, misused) the two years since the consummation of the German Revolution, and by its general attitude to that consummation. What we have said of schools applies also to universities. We want our universities to be German, and if the Christian communions have anything special to teach, let them do it in the institutions which they support and control. Let me give one example of how Christian credalism affects our universities. The beginning of term is a solemn moment for teachers and students alike. Why is it that sectarian services are held at such a time in German universities, for the Protestant to go to one, the Catholic to another, and for the majority to go to neither because they are equally untouched by both? Why do we not hold a service of consecration in which we can gather as Germans, so that we may enter on the work of the term together? How else can we feel that we are one nation, with a common German genius? Who would choose to be absent from that service,

where the words of Fichte, Hölderlin, and other great Germans were to be heard, instead of the texts and sermons of the sects? We will not rest in our fight for the German genius against an alien faith till every sphere of German life is emancipated from credal division, and from the domination that prevents German men and women following their conscience and their religious convictions. It is a scandal that Germans are still being forced to attend religious rites in which they are not interested. If I had charge of a parish, my Christianity would not allow me to preach to people who had been forced to come and hear me, especially when among them were those who lived by another faith. This compulsion, and the prejudices still operative against Germans who do not profess ecclesiastical Christianity, does not correspond with the German genius, and cannot be brought into harmony with the order issued by the Leader's deputy—an order which we are fighting to see carried out.

The consequences which I have drawn from our German faith, for internal reconstruction in the State, are a slight indication of the necessary practical effects of following the German genius. This much is clear: we are not putting forward our demands as sectaries who want their share in certain rights, but out of our

sense of responsibility for the whole; that is, for the nation, and not only for the couple of hundred thousand who already belong to us. Therefore, setting aside all differences, we offer our hand to every real German, and call on him to join with us in the common struggle for unity. But we can never give up the struggle for the German genius and a German faith. And we live in the hope that a nucleus of those who have been gripped by this faith will form a fellowship which will penetrate the whole nation by the inner power which it has shown in contest, without any compulsion being brought to bear on any man's conviction or conscience. Only under conditions of freedom can real faith flourish and true religion be preserved. We do not call in the secular arm to help us, as the Christians have often done against us, despite their multiplied assurances that they put their whole trust in the power of God. We are satisfied with the fact that the Leader has given us freedom to witness to our faith before the German nation, and we are grateful to him for it. We believe that the German nature, which is at work in the best elements of our nation, is itself on our side, and that in it the divine powers are active which endowed our nation with its character—a character which it will realize only if it returns to its own genius from the far country of an unnatural

faith. Therefore we call to the German nation: awake to the freedom of the German religious genius! Therein lies the only way to the realization of your true nature and the fulfillment of your God-given destiny!

THE SEMITIC CHARACTER OF CHRISTIANITY

I

We are now finally obliged to ask the question, whether Christianity or German Faith can (or ought to) be the decisive factor in the religious life of the German nation. It has surely become clear from all that has been said that we at least are of the opinion that only German Faith can fulfill the religious destiny of the nation. We hold, of course, that in Germany as elsewhere a community of believers in Jesus will continue to exist. Nor will that community fail to make a special contribution to the area in which it is housed. But we are convinced that only German Faith can be the standard, normative religious force; for the era is practically over when Christianity could claim to be the norm of religion. There are millions of Germans today in whom this claim has ceased to awaken any response.

This conviction is the result of another, that the nature of Christianity, its form of spirituality, does not fit the creative genius of the German nation. We have called Christianity "Near-Eastern" and "Semitic" because it arose

in that area, and because, however different it is in many respects from other Semitic faiths, it bears, unmistakably and unalterably, the same fundamental character. We shall mention only a few traits of the Semitic and Near-Eastern race, in order to show that they are, although in a spiritualized form, at work in the very heart of the Christian religion.

One thing we must not forget. When we are investigating the Near-Eastern and Semitic religious area as a whole, we must not simply seek for superficial resemblances between the various religions, but penetrate into their depths, so that we may get a grasp of their fundamental nature. It is only when such an investigation has been completed that we discover that those religions are phases and evolutionary stages in the development of one religious spirit. How different, for instance, is the person of Jesus and his way of experiencing God from that of a Moses! And yet the inmost character of their faith is one and the same, as Jesus himself felt. For his conviction, that he was the continuator and deepener of Old-Testament religion, is as surely ascertained as the conviction of all the New-Testament writers that the "new Covenant" was but a renewal of the old one, and that Christianity and Hebrew religion were essentially the same. The Epistle to the Hebrews is

the classic illustration of this, in its presentation of the events which centered in Jesus as the continuation and final fulfillment of the cult-events of the Old Testament. The author had a most delicate insight into the relation between the two. Christianity is, of course, not identical with Hebrew religion; but in their fundamental content and spiritual structure they are alike. It is therefore utterly untrue to say, as is often said, that Jesus fought against Jewish religion. Jesus, rather, fought *for* Jewish religion, against degenerations which had set in. That is the meaning of the sayings: "I am not come to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfill them," and "Salvation is of the Jews."

We shall therefore attempt to sketch once more the Near-Eastern and Semitic character of Jewish religion and its continuator, Christianity. It is typical of the Semitic race that they are markedly bound to this earth. This was the cause of the nonappearance of a belief in immortality among the chief Semitic peoples, the Babylonians and the Hebrews, and perhaps also among the ancient Arabs, even at a time when other peoples had long held the belief in a highly developed form. Belief in a resurrection does not come to the fore till the post-exilic period. Such a belief appears on the surface to contradict the "earth-bound" character of which

we were speaking. But on closer examination, the Jewish and Christian belief in resurrection really demonstrates it quite clearly. For late Judaism, and at bottom Christianity, is unable to conceive a true life after death or life from death, except by the miraculous reconstitution of the body, which has crumbled to dust, or its re-creation by the Lord out of the remains. This attachment to the "dust and ashes" shows an unmistakably "earth-bound" character. And it appears, in what for us is a most striking form, in the resurrection of Jesus himself. Paul and the rest of the Christians grounded their conviction that Jesus was Redeemer and victor on the fact that he had truly risen from the dead. But according to the documents, "truly risen" means that the body of Jesus was literally resuscitated and ascended into the sky. And the resurrection of the faithful to eternal life is in the long run not a whit different. The clause, "I believe in the resurrection of the flesh," still stands in the Apostles' Creed, and holds good for all who believe the whole of the Christian religion and not merely an abridgement of it. Thus the fundamental "earth-boundness" of the Semite comes to light in every phase of his religious development. Its significance becomes clear when we think how Paul said that the whole of his faith would be shattered if it were

found out that the body of Jesus had not risen. How different in a man from the Indo-Germanic religious area, is the attitude toward the body! For him it is but a moment in the total development of his self. It is returned to the elements and goes the way of all elements, while his life germ takes on a new form.

Another facet of the mental and spiritual attitude of the Semite is his idea of keeping accounts with God, and, intimately bound up with that, his belief in sacrifice and particularly in vicarious sacrifice.

Sacrifice, especially the magical and sacramental form involved in substitutionary rites, is a phenomenon which belongs to general religious history. But nowhere in the whole expanse of religious history is vicarious sacrifice so prominent as in the Near-Eastern and Semitic area. Take Hebrew religion, for example, where an animal (and originally, one may assume, a human being) was delivered over to the avenging powers as a substitute for the sin-stained people. A just God could only be gracious after accounts had been settled, and a vicarious sacrifice was necessary to achieve this end. There is no literal parallel in Christianity to such a vicarious sacrifice. But we can see how deep the ideas of "keeping an account with God," and of a vicarious sacrifice, have sunk into

the Christian religion, when we reflect on the fact that the suffering and death of Jesus were inevitably looked at from this point of view. He vicariously atoned for the crimes of men, which they were incapable of making good by any atonement of their own. God had laid down a law and men had broken it. But by satisfying the claims of the law, Jesus made it possible for God to pardon the lawbreakers. That is and remains the central Christian dogma. It is the same spirit, if in a new guise, which in the Old-Testament period created the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement.

Another fundamental characteristic of the Semite is his tendency to uniformity, to one-sidedness in matters of faith. This tendency is bound up with his intellectualism, and also with that will to power which built up mighty kingdoms in the political realm, which later in the form of the Messianic hope led the Jews to dream of the religious domination of the world, and which finally showed itself in religious life and preaching in the claim (supported on a strong rational basis) to possess the absolute truth. This is a claim common to all the great Semitic religions—Hebrew, Christian, and Mohammedan. In close connection with this claim we always find the monstrous attempt to combine it with the claim to political power. Nowhere

in the Indo-Germanic or Oriental religious area do we discover this pronounced religious characteristic.

Then, in the same connection, falls to be mentioned what we feel to be the stiff, unbending monotheism characteristic of Hebrew and Moslem religion. Of course a certain softening has occurred in the area of transition between the Near East and the Mediterranean world, in the doctrine of the Trinity and the belief in the God-bearing Queen of Heaven.

Semitic and Near-Eastern traits are united in the concept of a final irrevocable Judgment and an eternal damnation. Even in the Indo-Germanic area we find a so-called dualism, that is, the struggle between Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, and a knowledge of the tension which exists between life in this world and the mysterious immanence or transcendence of the ultimate Reality. But the Indo-Germanic world always tends to resolve this dualism into a tremendous incomprehensible unity, while the Semitic world stresses the idea that the opposition of Good and Evil, of redeemed and damned, is eternal. The terrific cleavages in the Near-Eastern type of man come here to the surface. On the one hand he sucks in the things of earth and gives himself over to them in sensual enjoyment. On the other hand he strives and strains to free

himself from the earth altogether, as in the Attis cult, where the worshiper got rid of sense and did a service to his goddess by self-emasculation, or in the monastic system, in which he tried by ascetic torments to quench physical impulse and so achieve redemption and saintliness. This type of man cannot succeed in harmonizing both worlds, and has to choose between them. There is no doubt at all that the yearning for redemption and the insistence on the Beyond which meet us in Christianity, are traceable to the same source, however they may vary from the original Near-East pattern. For the Semite and the Near-East type formed in that area, even among the Jews, an alliance of the closest character. Nor may we forget, with reference to Persia, facts which recent research have brought to light. Not only did the Near-Eastern type of man in past ages inhabit the whole of the Near East and penetrate almost into the heart of Persia; even today he is not merely a considerable but a dominating racial influence in many parts of the country. The rules of method fully entitle us, when employing race as a scientific criterion in the study of comparative religion, to ask whether many traits in Persian religion—such as the accentuated dualism expressed in the Persian belief in a Last Judgment and a resurrection—are not to be

accounted for by the subterranean influence of Near-Eastern blood. Moreover, the sharp contrasts in the geography and climate of the area undoubtedly affected the development of Persian religion. For we may not underestimate the influence of physical environment on the formation of racial characteristics, and so on the course which religion takes within a people.

It is not here our task to raise and answer all the questions which result from our contention that there is a definite Near-East and Semitic type of religion which characterizes all the faiths which have been born in that area. It was our intention simply to throw light on the scientific method we employ in treating problems of comparative religion, and to show that we are striving to perfect our method. It is by no means faultless as yet, nor are all its conclusions proved up to the hilt. But though many of the details still await verification, the fundamental principles of the method are already beyond criticism.

2

From the above considerations it is clear enough that we, because of our German Faith, must protest against the claim of the Christian religion to be the religion of the German nation. For its essence is determined by factors which

are quite foreign to us, and which we feel to be repugnant and cramping. Precisely those points which we have declared to be typically foreign in that religion are the foundation stones of Christian dogma. We are not dealing with trivialities which lie out on the circumference, but with convictions which are absolutely central.

At this point it is necessary to look once more at the figure of Jesus. Is he also conditioned by that Near-Eastern spirituality? Or did he liberate himself from his racial ties, with the result that he presents an entirely different type of religion? Is he an isolated phenomenon, superior to all racial considerations? The following general principle may be laid down: every great figure who soars above the centuries (and Jesus belongs of a certainty to that elect company) is a product of the attempt of the eternal creative will to exhibit ultimate Reality in its infinitude; but each and all are conditioned by the spirituality of the race and nation to which they belong.

It is, of course, not to be forgotten in this connection that there is scarcely a creative figure in religious history, whose racial descent is more debated than is that of Jesus. The possibility cannot be ruled out that he had Aryan blood in his veins, on account of the mixture of races in

the Near East. But the attempt to *prove* his Aryan descent will not succeed either. We shall, therefore, not let ourselves get involved in a tangle of possibilities, but confront the figure of Jesus as it meets us in the pages of the New Testament. No one can enter his presence, unless blinded with prejudice, without being filled with reverence for his human greatness, for his unparalleled power of loving, for his readiness to give his life for his cause. We who belong to the German Faith do not dream of closing our eyes to the impressiveness of his character; we have no reason for such a course. German Faith produces a real receptiveness to, and reverence for, all that is great. And many of Jesus' words and deeds touch a chord deep down in our hearts. But we protest against his being imposed on us as a leader and pattern. We must not allow our native religious life, which grows immediately out of our own genius, to be diverted into foreign tracks.

There is little to be gained at this point by cataloguing the traits in Jesus' words and deeds, in his life and death, which we feel to be Near-Eastern. Such are, of course, his pronounced belief in a devil, a Satan who is the "Prince of this world," his addresses on a Last Judgment and eternal damnation, his expectation of a kingdom of God into which only redeemed sinners

would enter, his belief that he would return on the clouds of heaven to judge the quick and the dead, and his conviction that he alone was the way, the truth, and the life (if in accordance with the usual exegesis of this Johannine passage, we are entitled to regard this last saying as authentic). What matters is that the general impression he makes does not suit our genius. Despite all its height and depth, it is and remains alien. And there can thus plainly be no other guide for a man of German Faith than the primal religious capacity of his nation. Or, in other words, he can take root in no other soil than the religious creativity of the German spirit, which is at work in him also, and is alone adequate to enable him in a way that suits his own genius to experience and give form to ultimate reality, life, nation and history, nature and the deeps of his soul, guilt and destiny. And we have had the experience that this suffices us for the mastery of life, and that we need no other way to the ultimate deeps of existence, that is, to God.

In the long run our attitude toward Jesus is determined by the fact that we do not require him as our one and only norm and leader. That may seem rash and foolhardy, perhaps even impious to some people. But if we said anything else, we should have to reproach ourselves

with not satisfying the demands of truth and reality.

Our statement that we do not require Jesus as leader does not arise from rebellion against God's revelation, but out of vital creative experience. We have accustomed ourselves to face even the facts which are on the surface terrifying, since we have been privileged to learn from experience, that there is no surer way to salvation than unconditional realism and fearless affirmation of life as it deals with us. And so has it dealt with us! It was the creative will of the Eternal for us that we should find the eternal foundation and the impregnable bulwark of life—and not through Jesus.

We believe that a real difference exists over this important point between the older generation who were pioneers for a Teutonicized Christianity, and the youth of today, who are aiming at a German Faith. The former still need, or imagine they need, Jesus in some form or other; the latter are not deeply moved by him. It may sound harsh, but it is true to say that he does not touch their hearts. Nor will that fact be altered by warnings and admonitions not to pass him by. Whether the religious history of our nation passes him by in the future or not, it will be conditioned by other religious forces than the good intentions of those who are afraid

that, without Jesus, the German nation will lose its way and its hold on life.

All depends on the question whether Jesus can be freed from the throttling grip of Near-Eastern and Semitic ideas. Can his living power be at work without a continual threat of introducing alien elements into our religious life? It is the duty of anyone who is actuated by a sincere, religious German piety, to free Jesus from these toils—if he feels that that is how he must serve his nation. But it is not *our* task. We have recognized that the spiritual plight of our people is due to the alien influence of Near-Eastern and Semitic elements. We are therefore carrying on a pitiless battle against them. We are convinced that there is no power capable of exorcising the evil except German Faith. It will show Germany the way of salvation.

Responsibility and Destiny

KARL HEIM

RESPONSIBILITY AND DESTINY: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HAUER'S VIEW AND THE MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE AND THE REFORMERS

We should be grateful to Wilhelm Hauer for this: at a time when the Christian Church and Christian theology are in danger of syncretism, he has brought clearly home to us the irreconcilable opposition of the two religions between which the German nation has to choose —the religion of faith in the divine element in man's inner nature, and the religion of faith in Jesus Christ. Iwand[1] has correctly stated the position, though the lines that he draws are perhaps a little too clear-cut: "Hauer opposes to the thesis of Christianity the antithesis that Jesus is not only not the true way, but is actually the way of error, and that a German will normally, through Jesus, not only not find God, but actually lose him; that he, in fact, stands in our path when we wish to break our way through to God, and his figure must be banished from our midst before the divine light can again be mirrored in our souls without the aid of any medium or mediator."

[1] In an article in *Evangelische Theologie*, July, 1935.

But this general statement of the antithesis between the Christian faith and Hauer's "German view of God"[2] does not make it clear where the real root of the conflict between the two theories lies. For now we are faced with the question, Why is it that the man with a "German view of God" believes that he is able to enter into union with God "without mediator, without Bible, in virtue of his own inner nature," whereas the man who bases his religion on the Bible finds it impossible, and needs a mediator at the critical point?

Before we examine this question more closely, there is something that must be said against Hauer's method. We are not entitled to make easier for ourselves the serious conflict between the two interpretations of life that are struggling for the possession of the German soul by drawing a caricature of our opponents' view and disposing of it quickly and easily. No one who enters upon this difficult conflict with a full sense of its seriousness is entitled to set forth a version of his opponents' faith which is superficial and entangled in dogma, and then make it the butt of his ridicule. We must take our opponents seriously, and only consider the purest and most vital form of their faith. If Hauer had followed this fundamental principle, he would

[2] This is Hauer's phrase and the title of his principal book.

have realized that it is not only in the Germanic belief in destiny, as he supposes,[3] but also in genuine Christianity, that the interpretation of the world's secret is lifted out of the "isolated sphere of human will"[4] and elevated into a context which is vaster than the individual. But, according to the German view of God, this context is the sway of destiny, of a fate that overrules us without any participation by our personal wills. "No man changes the Fates' word" (Hildebrand's Death Song). "Fate wrought disaster." "Dark Fates wrought long time of need" (Edda I, 60). "No man sees the eventide if the Fates have spoken" (Edda I, 57). "Destiny and personality are in a permanent state of mutual reaction according to the Germanic conception" (Rosenberg: *Der Mythus des XX Jahrhunderts*, 47th and 48th edition, p. 401). The "passionless working of the Fates" is a "symbol of a necessity in the laws of the universe which cannot be investigated and yet is experienced" (Rosenberg, p. 399). The New-Testament conception of the vast context in which we are involved is quite different. According to that, this context is the tremendous conflict between the divine will and the

[3] The reference is to Hauer: *A German View of God* (*Deutsche Gottschau*), p. 141.
[4] *Ibid.*

power of the Satanic will which aims at thwarting God's plan of salvation—a struggle which will culminate at the last in the victory of God.

Jesus' firm belief in the existence of a Satanical power opposed to God cannot be disposed of by saying: "We shall not allow ourselves to be misled into adopting the belief that behind the world in its disorder stands Satan, who is something other than God's power; God works in all things";[5] or by saying, "To plant guilt simply in the evil will of man or in the will of a Satan, who is God's enemy, seems to us to be a limitation of the power of Omnipotent Deity. No! The roots of it lie far deeper—in fact, deep in the eternal Will of the world, which leads men through the catastrophe of sin and guilt to their true being" (Hauer, l. c., p. 150). On the contrary, the profundity of this interpretation of life and the world, resting on the conflict between God and the devil—and we may find it in the sayings of Christ, and after that in its most mature form in Luther—consists precisely in the fact, that the two statements, "Satan is the god of this world," and "the devil is God's devil," are both made with utter conviction, and with no attempt at a rational reconciliation. According to Luther (in *De Servo Arbitrio*), God necessarily moves and works his will even in

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 144.

Satan and those without God. The rights of the omnipotent Deity are not in any single respect limited through the reality of the devil. "Satan has received from God the power to work against God. Chapter XIII of the book of Revelation is full of the idea: It was granted to him to ——. The Church's certainty of God is in no way diminished by the power of Satan" (Förster, s. v. διαβολος in Kittel's *Wörterbuch zum neuen Testament*, Vol. II, p. 80). Hauer could object that the double assertion, "the devil works against God" and "God works in the devil," is logically inconceivable and therefore nonsensical. But Hauer has no real right to make this objection, for his own Germanic view of God also derives its vitality from a double assertion which is logically just as inconceivable. It is committed to the contradiction of both believing in destiny and being conscious of moral responsibility. Hauer says of the men whom we encounter in the sagas of the Edda: "Yet no belief in destiny was able to remove their consciousness of responsibility or even to weaken it. Their spiritual and moral depths made them capable of asserting the power of both these things in their incomprehensible interrelation. They were filled with the feeling that although the two could not be logically reconciled in our human thinking, yet somewhere in the sphere

of primal life and activity they are one, in a manner unrealizable by thought, but experienced by active Being in a world beyond the senses" (Hauer, l. c., p. 142). Therefore, Hauer's view is just as much built on an irreconcilable antinomy as that of the Bible and the Reformers.

So let us leave aside all attempts to caricature and so quickly dispose of our opponents' opinions, and take each other quite seriously. If we seek to discover the point where the two ways of life part company, we shall find that the conflict is seen at its clearest at the point where Hauer says that the depths of the German nature exclude the notion that we must choose between two alternatives, that my action is *either* to be ascribed to destiny *or* is my own responsibility, or, that it is *either* my duty *or* not my duty (Hauer, l. c., p. 142). This brings us face to face with the fundamental question as to the relationship between decisions of the will and impersonal Fate. Let us therefore put the root question. Is it really possible to do what Hauer attempts, that is, to transcend the alternative "Responsibility or Destiny"? Can I feel myself responsible for something which does not lie within the sphere of my own decision, something which, in fact, I have done or suffered under the compulsion of Destiny? Does my conscience *really* condemn me for

something which I *had* to do, something which was just as much my fate as, for instance, dying from a disease which I have caught in the exercise of my profession as a doctor, or being entombed by an avalanche in which I have been involved by a misadventure?

The answer that we can give to this question is this: As soon as the alternative "Responsibility or Destiny" is removed, as soon as we wipe out the sharp line which is drawn between the actions for which I am responsible and the things which happen to me and for which I have no responsibility, all the foundations on which the ordering of national and social life is built begin to weaken, and especially the foundations of any criminal law. In the administration of justice and the assessment of punishments, everything hangs on the question, Can the accused really be held responsible for that which is placed to his account? or was he perhaps brought by some kind of morbid affection to the pitch of not knowing what he was doing? Is it a case of deliberate murder, or has a man killed the seducer of his wife, whom he has discovered *in flagrante delicto*, in a fit of uncontrollable jealousy and blind fury? And in the case of every suicide, we ask, Was it carried out in complete clearness of mind and responsibility, or has the man thrown himself out of the window

when in a condition of mental darkness? All the moral earnestness with which a father appeals to the conscience of his small son who has deceived him, or with which an officer prescribes his punishment to a soldier who has slept at the watch, is at once weakened and shattered as soon as responsibility and destiny are absorbed into one another, as soon as that of which my conscience calls me guilty and that which is a necessity of the universe's laws shade into one another in such a way that no clear distinction can any longer be made between the two. However profound Hauer's remarks on the necessity of guilt may sound, however favorably they may impress us when we look at the matter from the spectator's point of view, they become very dangerous as soon as I let them have full play on me at some critical moment of my moral development, for instance, at a moment when I am beset by the temptation of forsaking my self-discipline in its struggle with the impulses of my nature, and of allowing myself to be led astray by the alluring Sirens' song of impure pleasures. In such a situation as that, it would work on me like a sweet poison to be told: "Without guilt a man does not come into being. Therefore guilt is man's destiny. Therefore it is sent by God, if we look at it in its ultimate context" (Hauer, l. c., p. 150). "In the Teu-

tonic and German faith there is a deeper understanding of guilt. According to it, we should always speak of it as a destiny or fate" (Hauer, l. c., p. 139). "The sagas of the Edda are permeated by the mighty realization that the hero who goes the way he must go is involved in guilt" (Hauer, l. c., p. 142). This view is extraordinarily dangerous for those in peril of falling. It weakens the monogamous resolutions of the husband who is tempted to be unfaithful to his wife. It quiets the conscience of the tyrant who in cold blood steps over the dead bodies of his enemies to secure his throne. It gives the adulterer the courage to obey his passion. For he is entitled by it to say, "Without guilt a man does not come into being: that is how God made the world." On this view, why should I not obey the necessity of the universe, which is leading onward through thick darkness into the light?

It is when we come to the working out in practice of the fusion of moral responsibility and the sway of destiny that we are brought to realize the further fact: as soon as an attempt is made to transcend the ultimate alternatives and build a bridge over the abyss which separates moral responsibility and destiny, we find ourselves left not with a mysterious tension between the statement, "I am fulfilling my inevitable

destiny," and the other statement, "I take the responsibility for my action upon myself," but with the consequence that destiny becomes the all-controlling force, and the moral categories are absorbed and swallowed up by it. The *word* "guilt" is still used, it is true; but what is now called guilt is no longer guilt in the real sense, for it has no longer the relentless seriousness of a violation of the categorical imperative.

It is not possible to discover whether a man really means guilt when he uses the word, or just a tragic necessity of fate, from the fact that he uses it with considerable emphasis. This can only be discovered from the way in which he seeks to overcome it. According to Hauer, the "genuine man" and the "genuine woman" are "to face their guilt," and this, "with the idea not of being anxious and distressed about it and imploring the intervention of an atoner, but of reaching maturity through it in courageous action, and, if necessary, of enduring outward disaster because of it for the sake of inward strength. In this way they will become capable of entering through their guilt into a world of new activity" (Hauer, l. c., p. 142). This statement shows with especial clearness how the obliteration of the boundaries between moral responsibility and destiny works itself out in practice. It misleads us into saying about guilt

what is only true of destiny, and so into robbing guilt of its seriousness and its gravity. It is perfectly true that a tragic act of destiny, for instance, blindness sustained in war or a wound which has maimed me, can bring me to maturity and fit me for courageous action, in the sense that I can achieve under this disadvantage the very highest that a man in such a condition can achieve. In this way I can enter through a disastrous destiny into "a world of new activity." For example, I may enlist once again in the army when I have scarcely recovered from a serious wound, in order to dedicate the remainder of my strength to my country. But the case with my guilt is quite different. I can draw no strength, only weakness, from guilt. A guilty act as such, lying, for instance, or adultery, reverses the whole course of my development, and takes away my honor and my worth as a man. If as a "genuine man" I face my guilt, this can only mean that I stand up to the terrible accusation to which my guilt renders me liable, offering no extenuation and making no attempt to transform my guilt into tragic destiny, and then that I make a complete and fundamental break with it.

Hauer quotes in this connection passages from Eckhart about the "blessing which sin bestows." But these sentences of Eckhart belong entirely

to the circle of Christian ideas, and have nothing whatever to do with the old-Teutonic confusion of responsibility and destiny. For the "blessing which sin bestows," described by Eckhart, does not reside, even according to the passages quoted by Hauer, in the impious act itself, or in the fact that my guilt becomes a tragic destiny in which I reach maturity and do courageous actions. Sin's blessing resides in the denial of the sin which follows upon the sinful act. It comes into existence when I make a complete and fundamental break with the sin and in repentance turn myself away from it. By thus denying the sin, I am so deeply "humbled and abased" that I "arm myself against every sin with an impregnable will." In this way I reach "divine repentance," and in this state of deep contrition I experience the incomprehensible readiness of God to forgive. And it is this experience of God's grace to the repentant sinner that causes me to realize, as I look back on my lamentable fall, the wonderful fact that even my fall was under God's providence, that God wished to draw me to himself even through my fall and the mercy which it called into operation, and so to bring me into ever closer relationship with himself. This is no old-Teutonic idea; it is the Biblical truth which Paul compresses into one phrase as he looks back over

the whole history of God's salvation: "God hath shut up all into disobedience, that he might have mercy on all" (Romans 11. 32).

Hauer's whole presentation of the old-Teutonic belief in destiny, and the way in which he quotes Eckhart, make it once again quite clear that two views are here in fundamental opposition to one another, and that there is no possibility of synthesis or compromise. The one view is to be found in the Indian belief in Karma, in Greek tragedy, in the Edda, and partly also in Goethe. According to this, the last court of appeal which decides everything, is an inevitable destiny. It is this destiny which makes us guilty. The other line starts with the "religion of conscience" of the German Reformers, and goes on through Kant's doctrine of radical evil to Schelling's philosophy of revelation. According to this, the ultimate issue was decided not by destiny, but by a primitive and original guilt; this was the source of everything else, and this brought upon us all the tragic destinies from which we suffer. Hauer's vague commingling of responsibility and destiny makes a very strong impression upon us just because it meets a need of our hearts. As soon as our conscience accuses us of something, we want to shift the responsibility for our action on to something which takes the burden from us

and puts us in a more tolerable position. We want to muddy the water in which we find ourselves, in order to make ourselves invisible to our pursuer. Kant, upon whose notion of the categorical imperative the whole discipline of the Prussian army was built, concentrated all his philosophical acumen on distinguishing with absolute clearness the category of the ethical and so also the nature of guilt; he went about his task in the same way as a chemist may make it his lifework to free from all mixtures an element which has only recently been discovered, and which was previously known only in all kinds of compounds and combinations, and so to elucidate its true nature. Kant's conviction was this: the majesty of duty only exercises an irresistible influence on the conscience of the man in the street, if the moral factor, under whose iron bands we are so closely held, and before whose incorruptible court we must render our account, is emancipated from all combination with anything that comes to us merely as the working of destiny, and so belongs to our natural make-up and to our lot as men. He, therefore, repudiates all attempts to derive guilt from an hereditary disposition, or from our being a compound of spirit and nature, reason and sense. Thus everything that belongs to our natural make-up is free from liability to guilt; in fact, it

serves rather to excuse us. This drives Kant to the conclusion, the necessity of which Schelling also saw, that the existence of guilt in the world cannot be in any sense attributed to a combination of external powers or to cosmic forces. Guilt is a completely inexcusable, unexplainable, irrational decision, an act of the "intelligible ego" prior to all experience, by which it has decided to set on occasion the driving forces of the senses above the command of reason. Kant's doctrine of radical evil is only a philosophical paraphrase of what Christ calls the power of Satan, and an inevitable consequence of clearly understanding the moral category.

Schopenhauer takes the same line in this matter as Kant and Schelling. The Old-Testament account of the Fall was for him not a Jewish insult to mankind, and something which the heroic ideal of the Germanic man must reject; on the contrary, he says: "The myth of the Fall (although it is probably borrowed, like the rest of Judaism, from the Zend Avesta) is the one part of the Old Testament to which I can concede any metaphysical, though, of course, allegorical, truth; in fact, it is the only part that reconciles me to the Old Testament at all." The repudiation of the doctrine of Original Sin is for Schopenhauer not a return to the Nordic ideal of honor and freedom, but insipid French

optimism. "The foundation and the prime error of all Rousseau's philosophy is that in place of the Christian doctrine of Original Sin and the primal corruption of the human race, he puts man's unlimited perfectibility and original goodness, which has only gone astray because of civilization and its results; on this he grounds his optimism and humanism."[6]

So much, then, is clear: in the history of German thought there have always been two tendencies in conflict with each other; one is the attempt to take away from guilt its sting and transform it into a tragic destiny of mankind, in which we are involved by our human make-up, the constitution of our sensual nature, or the history of our race; the other is that awakening of the clear consciousness of guilt which leads to passionate self-accusation, and so to the repudiation of all excuses and all confusion of personal responsibility with forces that are morally neutral.

The principal argument which Hauer adduces to justify him in ranging himself on the side of the Greek tragedians and against Kant, and in destroying the "either-or" of responsibility and destiny, is the fact all too well-known to everyone in touch with life, and treated in Christian

[6] Schopenhauer: *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Vol. I, Bk. 4, Chap. 46.

ethics from time immemorial under the head of the conflict of duties; this is called by Hauer "the strife and tension between the various spheres of reality." "If we take a profound enough view of evil, we shall discover that it consists in the enigmatic fact that the various spheres of life in the world are engaged in a harsh and bitter struggle with one another, each striving to maintain its rights and its proper constitution." For instance, the life of the individual and the life of the community cannot of themselves "achieve an honorable harmony with one another." For they come into constant collision. As a result of this, it is quite inevitable from one point of view that man should be guilty. "The guilt of mankind is derived from this profound source, rather than from the evil will" (Hauer, l. c., p. 144). Thus it is patent, according to Hauer, that we are just compelled by circumstances, that is, by destiny, to do or leave undone certain things that none the less burden our consciences with guilt. There are historical situations, for example, in which a man who is called to leadership must neglect wife and children in order to rescue his nation from disaster. This is destiny, and yet guilt at the same time.

We must face the question which here meets us: Does not this undeniable fact of the conflict

of values constitute a compelling proof that guilt and destiny cannot be put into watertight compartments? The answer which we must give from a Christian point of view is surely this: Guilt does not consist in outraging a value current in worldly affairs, but in the transgression of a definite command of God. If God gives me a task, in the fulfillment of which I must neglect my family, this neglect does not involve guilt, but is, rather, a sorrow which I am to endure. On the contrary, I should incur guilt if I were to look after my family in such a case; for that would be disobedience to God. So there can be a collision of values, but not a conflict of moral duties. For God cannot give two commandments at the same time, one of which nullifies the other. The fact that there are conflicts of values in worldly matters, "that the various spheres of life in the world are engaged in a harsh and bitter struggle, each striving for its rights and its proper constitution," does not do anything at all to dispose of the alternatives Responsibility and Destiny. The exact reverse is the case. It is just when these conflicts occur that the awakened conscience of a man who tries to obey God draws a sharp line between the two. My destiny consists in, among other things, the limitedness of the time, space, and strength at my disposal, making it impossible for me in

certain cases to fulfill the demands of society and the needs of my family at the same time. God does not hold me answerable for these limitations of my existence; they are grounded in the circumstances in which he has set my life. Guilt only occurs when I neglect a duty which God imposes on me for a particular time. Thus the fact of the collision of duties does not lead to the confusion of responsibility and destiny. Kant is quite right when he discerns in such indiscriminate confusion the undermining of every kind of morality. In answer to Hauer we must set forth as clearly as possible the nature of the unbridgeable gulf which separates the two.

Destiny, in the form of an illness, a shipwreck, an earthquake, or an avalanche disaster, I can always think of as a link in the long chain of cause and effect. But in the case of guilt, this is exactly what I may not do. If my conscience accuses me of a lapse, of cowardly flight in a moment of tremendous responsibility, perhaps, or of indifference to the fate of my brother who has fallen a victim to assassins, this action of mine is for me an "underivable ultimate," which I may not ascribe to any cause in order to explain it and so condone it. Someone else, who was not the agent, but the spectator of the action, may explain my act psychologically from my character and heredity, historically from the

milieu in which I have grown up, or fatalistically from the interplay of the forces of destiny which made the act unavoidable. But I myself am not entitled to do this. To me, as soon as my conscience assails me, every explanation of that kind is instantaneously forbidden. For my conscience, which is above all corruption, speaks to me in these words with utter clearness, "*You* are guilty, you alone." In fact, we must put the matter even more clearly, in order to set forth the distinction between responsibility and destiny in as clear-cut a manner as we can. My conscience tells me: every time you try to shift guilt on to something else, or to explain it as the result of destiny, you incur additional guilt; you are debiting your guilt account yet more than it is already debited, and you heap up yet more guilt against the Day of Judgment, whenever you look for explanation of any sort, instead of making the frank confession, "Father, I have sinned."

Now that we have at last purged the notion of moral responsibility and guilt from the excrescences of fatalism, and set it clearly forth in its incomparable uniqueness, we can make perfectly clear where it is that German Faith and the Christianity of the Reformation part company. The vital difference between the two does not consist in the antithesis of two moral

ideals wholly different in content. Nor is it the question whether the Ten Commandments form a supranational and supraracial foundation on which to construct the various types of human society, or whether it is necessary to expand and revise these commandments from a Teutonic point of view, as Hauer has done in his "Aryan Nine Commandments."[7] Agreement could be reached on these issues. For, long before there was such a thing as a "German Faith Movement," prominent Protestant missionaries—Dr. Bruno Gutmann, for instance—had discovered, during their missionary work among primitive tribes, the ethical values lying in the native customs which have grown up out of a people's blood and soil. They put forward the view that one race or nation has no right to force its moral code on another; and that the gospel cannot do more than preserve and deepen the native morality of the people to whom it is preached. There need thus have broken out no antagonism between the old faith and the new simply over the question of the national "nomos," the customs which are native to a people.

The seat of the contradiction is elsewhere. It lies not in the question of how we obtain the

[7] Taken from Nordic mythology: Honor the Deity; honor thy ancestors and thy descendants; honor the great men of thy people; honor thy father and mother; do not dishonor thyself; be loyal to thy people; do not steal; be truthful; be helpful to the noble.

content of the ethical ideal, that is, whether it is from Biblical or national sources, but in the much harder question of how we fare when we try to put our moral ideal into practice. Both views, it is true, take at the start yet another step in common. Even the leaders of the "German Faith Movement" admit that we men, measured by the standard of the Absolute, fail to reach the ideal. We are all "insufficient." We share in the world's guilt. That is bound up with the "tragic structure" of reality which involves an irreconcilable conflict of values.

This tragic view of existence is one of the fundamental traits of primitive Teutonic feeling about life and the world. But here emerges the fundamental opposition of the two philosophies. The question arises: What significance, in respect to our relationship with ultimate reality, does our tragic failure to fulfill the absolute demand possess? The "German Faith" glosses over the dissonance between life and the ideal. For it does not regard this dissonance as guilt in the sense of an ultimate, unconditioned, inescapable responsibility; guilt for it is rather rated a tragic destiny in which I am involved and which has come to me. Even if I accept the responsibility for this tragic destiny and face my guilt, even so I am not identical

with it. I still bear in my inmost being that "divine spark" which is at one with the Deity. Guilt ruffles the surface of my being, but in the deeps of my soul I still have immediate access to God. Guilt does not call my oneness with God in question. It is, rather, absorbed into the ardors of a mystical intimacy with God, like a drop of water squirted into a flame.

But this is the point at which Luther came to grief, when he sought passionately in his monk's cell to experience that union of the soul with God which was so familiar to him from the mystical tradition of the Middle Ages. He encountered the tragic fact that we succeed all the less in really experiencing an "*unio mystica*" with God, the more hotly and anxiously we strain after it. It evades us, like the fruit which Tantalus attempted to grasp, in the very moment in which we would fain seize it. And Luther's fierce inner struggles taught him the reason for this. If God is a reality, he demands from us the love of our whole heart, of our whole soul, of our whole mind, and of our whole strength. In our relationship with a human being or any other finite creature there is a certain value in our giving him a fragment of our life. But it is different in the case of God. Our entire existence is his due. If we give him but half or three quarters of our life, and

retain a remnant for ourselves, it is no mere pardonable insufficiency, nor a tragic discord between ideal and practice; it is the refusal to give God what belongs to him. We are rebels against him; for with him it is a question of "all or nothing." Anyone who has not encountered this painful fact has not seriously sought to experience mystical union with God. He has simply talked about such a union; he has not yet struggled in earnest to obtain it. But as soon as we realize the tragic fact that union with God remains a goal which we cannot reach, certain weighty consequences inevitably follow. However much we try, we cannot really manage to give God our whole heart. We can do doughty deeds. We can surrender our lives for a great cause. We can lead a life of extreme self-discipline and asceticism. But one thing we cannot do: we cannot by our own efforts eradicate "desire" from our heart, that "*concupiscentia*," which is directed ever anew toward transitory things, in opposition to the will of God. Anyone who says that we can has never seriously tried to do it. He is living in a state of self-deception, and is still unaware what a fearful thing it is to have to do with God. That was what Luther, as a result of his long inner struggle, made clear in passionate words to the students who heard his lectures on the Epistle

to the Romans in 1515-1516: "It is sheer nonsense to say that, in his own strength, a man can love God above all things and perform the works of the law. . . . For people who say this feel, willy-nilly, evil desires within themselves. This is what I have to say to them: 'Come now! Enough of that! Be men! Use all your strength to prevent these desires from being within you. Prove what you assert—that it is possible to love God with all one's strength by nature, without the help of grace. If you are free from desires, we will believe you. But if you live in them, you are not even keeping the law.' "

The Luther who hurled these fiery words at his opponents was through and through a man of heroic type. He risked his life again and again for his cause. He was ready at any moment to accept the threatened death at the stake. He knew that men are rightly praised and honored for their heroic achievements. But before God all that honor counts for nothing. For when we enter his presence we are in a new dimension. "The judgment of God is of an infinite subtlety" (*"Dei judicium est infimae subtilitatis"*). Although we hear nothing on every side but the praises of those whom our deeds fill with enthusiasm, before the blazing eye of God we appear as rebels, since we have

failed to give God what is God's—the undivided devotion of our whole heart.

Luther did not try to escape this annihilating realization. He held to it with unswerving honesty, and with unexampled courage drew the whole conclusion. That was the Teutonic strain in him! From that results everything else which brought him into conflict with the mysticism of Meister Eckhart, on which the "German Faith" is built. If we appear guilty in the eyes of God, even in respect of our most splendid achievements, then we cannot elevate ourselves of our own accord into union with God. For access to God is closed to us, and we cannot in our own strength push the door open again. We have no claim on fellowship with God. We are utterly dependent on him. God alone can decide whether he will expel us from his presence forever, or receive us as sinners into fellowship with him. Nor can we lay down the law how he is to restore us. If he does it through a mediator, it is perhaps a blow to our pride. We might have preferred another way. But the accused has no right to inform his judge how he is to pardon him—granted that pardon is a possibility at all.

From these considerations, this much is clear: the antagonism between the "German Faith" and Protestant Christianity does not lie in the

fact that the former elaborates a national and racial code of ethics, while the latter has based its ethic on supranational and supraracial foundations. Nor does it lie in praise for human heroism on the one hand and defamation and calumniation of man on the other. The Protestant view of life has as complete an appreciation of "native genius" and heroism as has the "German Faith Movement." The opposition between them lies wholly and solely in the fact that the one in mystic rapture glosses over the dissonance between the will and the deed, for it has transformed guilt into a tragic destiny which does not touch the depths of our life and, therefore, cannot destroy our inward relationship to God; while the other lays this dissonance, as sin, on the conscience of man, so that he can no longer explain away his disobedience to God as tragic fate. He must answer for it to God, his eternal Judge. The judgment which God will give on guilty men is God's concern alone. We men have no influence in the matter. Only when we have realized that in the matter of guilt we are wholly dependent on God's decision do we begin to understand the message of the Bible.

Jesus Christ and the Spirit of the Age

KARL ADAM

JESUS CHRIST AND THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

EVERY age has a spirit of its own, its peculiar way of looking at men and affairs. This spirit is a presupposition of our thinking and gives it a particular direction from the start, before we take up any conscious attitude. The spirit of the age makes discipleship of Jesus easier or more difficult, according as it is akin or alien to his spirit. For the believer too those features in the picture of Jesus tend to be accentuated, which correspond to or contradict the peculiar way of feeling and thinking which the age produces in us. Alien and repellent elements are pushed out to the circumference or otherwise impaired, while those elements which attract us, because of their modernity and nearness to present-day life, are placed in the center with the limelight full upon them. Thus the spirit of each age furnishes a strong temptation to falsify the genuine picture of Jesus, or at least to distort the original lines of his character.

One example will suffice. When the picture of Jesus began to dominate Hellenistic spirituality—that is to say, the Graeco-Roman mentality enriched by Oriental influences—at the

end of the second century A. D., it encountered a spirit which had taken on an antisensuous, ascetic, stamp from the successors of Plato. It was quite natural that those imbued with this spirit should paint the picture of Christ and of Christianity in antisensuous, ascetic colors; that they should read and understand those lofty sayings of our Lord which refer to the bearing of the cross and the denial of self, as if the true follower of Jesus must despise his body as a monstrous, unnatural object, and as if the human body were to be maltreated as a "garment of shame," and all bodily grace, all passions of the senses, all full-blooded life were to be not only mastered but annihilated. It is a well-known fact that this caricature of the figure of Jesus warped the moral teaching of Tatian and Tertullian, that it afterward, under the influence of Neo-Platonism, penetrated into orthodox Church circles, and not least into Syro-Egyptian monasticism, and that it even unsettled the youthful Augustine. But the effects outside the Church of this distortion of the picture of Jesus were positively disastrous. There arose the movement known as Gnosticism, utterly repudiating the physical; and it exercised an incalculable influence. This movement, infused with Manichaean elements, smoldered on in subterranean fashion among the sects of the Albigen-

sians and the Cathari right into the Middle Ages, and the Church needed to employ the severest punitive measures to preserve the rights of the body and to rescue Western culture from the excesses of an overaccentuated spirituality. Yet Jesus then as now stood revealed in dazzling clearness before the eyes of those who had surrendered themselves, not to the spirit of the age, but to the supratemporal spirit of the Church—Jesus in his infinitely lofty maturity, his serenity, his detachment, his freedom from earth; one whose incomparable understanding and love encompassed the whole of the glorious world of sense, the mustard tree and the sparrow, the lilies, the children; one who finally departed from the world in the splendor of his resurrection-body and consecrated beauty in his transfigured flesh. It had only been the spirit of the age which had distorted the picture.

Such a spirit is at work in every age, tempting believers and menacing faith. An interesting book by Fr. X. Kiefl, which appeared some years ago, undertook to show how the caricatures of Christ and Christianity which have been attempted from the Age of Enlightenment down to the present day, can be traced back to the prevalent philosophy of the age. On the other hand, it is certain that when the peculiarities of the spirit of the age are in tune with the spirit

of Christ, the depth and vitality of Christian profession can be tremendously increased. The Christian faith was never more alive, never more intense, never more central in private and public life, than at the zenith of the Middle Ages, the period which created the equestrian statue at Bamberg and the statues of the benefactors in Naumburg Cathedral. It is to be my task to investigate whether and how far the spirit of the present day attempts to exercise influence on Christian discipleship. Our question, then, is, what special peculiarities lie at hand in the spirit of today, to affect the picture of Christ? Does the modern picture of Christ correspond with the original handed down by the Church through the centuries, or not? Plainly, my answer can in no sense be exhaustive.

What is the spirit of today? What is the modern picture of Jesus? Can one mention them both in one breath? Schweitzer, in his book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, points out, à propos of Gnosticism, the remarkable fact that the second Christian century "already presents a struggle of all possible types of thought to claim Christ for themselves." He remarks by way of introduction, "It is almost pathetic to observe how everyone finds himself with his point of view and his range

of interests reflected in Jesus, or, at any rate, wants to have some share in him." It is still the same today. However much men may look askance at the Christ of the creeds, they do not want to lose Jesus altogether; and the best of them seek to discover in Jesus the ideals which they cherish and the highest values of their generation, or to depict him as the original, classical example of them. It is, of course, not worth while recounting the whole series of modern biographers of Jesus, from D. F. Strauss onward, who acknowledge Jesus in the same breath in which they deny Christ. Our concern is with the modern picture of Jesus, not with those who have painted it, as we seek to indicate as clearly as possible those lines which our age has introduced into or emphasized in the portrait, lines which tend to blur the original figure or change it beyond all recognition.

Where does the modern man stand? What is the wave on whose crest we are borne forward, now that the last wave has already ebbed and another is rising behind us? We are at the close of the Age of Enlightenment, the age in which the intellect—the critical, analytic attitude of the age of Reason—emancipated itself from the all-envisaging, comprehensive synthesis of the past, and, like a rebellious slave,

asserted its independence of the unity of human culture. "Autonomous" thinking forced all reality, natural as well as supernatural, into the Procrustes-bed of its preconceived rationalistic schematism, and excluded from the purview of science all that lay beyond the conceptual, especially the reality of purely emotional and irrational experience, the reality of our subterranean connections with our nation and with society, and not least the tremendous reality of our superterrestrial bond with the living God, the Creator of all. Scientific thinking was torn from its context, from the fruitful mother earth, which was its original home and which had given it its stimulus, its illuminative power, and its bright and youthful countenance. It had now become depersonalized, abstract, bloodless thinking; thinking for its own sake, science for its own sake. It had ceased to be thinking which took account of the breadth, depth, and height of our being; it had ceased to be passionate, to be based on the whole of existence. We, who are men of vitality and spirit, suffered so much under this type of thinking that we could not have put up with it forever. We have released ourselves from it. But however true it is that we are removed from the sphere of its inner jurisdiction, the wave which bears us on is still trembling from the results of the shock which

the Enlightenment gave to it. Even at this distance we are still feeling its after-effects. These are to be seen not so much in the activities of the conscious mind, as in certain subconscious tendencies toward hypercriticism and skepticism. These appear in the philosophical realm in a strong antipathy, an outspoken resentment, toward the claims to truth and validity made by the inexplicable, mysterious, miraculous elements in religious ideas and events.

But nowhere does the mysterious and miraculous obtrude itself more strikingly than in the figure of Jesus of Nazareth. The whole story, from the star in the east to the resurrection, is a blaze of miracle. And his preaching culminates in the unheard-of, unbelievable assertion that he, a hungering, suffering, mortal man, is God's own Son and our Redeemer. So it cannot but be that the modern man, still under the influence of the Enlightenment, approaches this Jesus with extreme reserve; and, inevitably, the way to him is infinitely harder than it was for the men of antiquity and the Middle Ages, whose thinking was not yet departmentalized, and who still based their life and thought on the totality of their existence, on their primal bond with heaven and earth. Thus the real problem which Jesus creates for the man of today meets him at the very outset. It consists in the pre-

liminary question whether knowledge of the supernatural is possible at all.

This lies further back than what is really the central problem, treated so penetratingly and comprehensively by the Schoolmen—the question whether the claim of Christianity on our intellect and conscience is reasonable and credible, that is, whether its historicity and justification in experience can be established. This central problem is solved. We know of no historical event that has left so deep a mark on the history of mankind as Christianity, that has effected so far-reaching a change of attitude, so radical a translation of values to a loftier plane, and that still today touches every man so nearly, believer and unbeliever alike, in the core of his personality and the center of his being. Christ and Christianity have therefore been investigated with more intense earnestness throughout the centuries than any other historical phenomenon. Every possible scientific means has been employed, every effort of love and hate has been expended, in examining the credentials and claims of the gospel, down to the last jot and tittle; every possibility has been explored of explaining it as an occurrence of purely natural origin. And yet, so far, no one has really succeeded in demolishing even one of the mighty pillars on which Christian preaching is supported. Not

a single one of the many destructive hypotheses directed against the authenticity and reliability of the early Christian records has been able to command scientific assent for any length of time. They were all hardly brought out before they were modified and softened down, and quite often supplanted by an opposite theory. The efforts of radical criticism during the last two hundred years have been incapable of scientifically refuting or convicting of error a single fundamental historical assertion about Christ. Wherever the adamantine "No" of unbelief and skepticism is hurled against the affirmations of faith, it springs not from a crystal-clear insight into irreproachably attested facts, but from the depths of personality which are beyond our control, from those ultimate attitudes and decisions of the spirit which lie beyond all scientific knowledge. Unbelief has its mysteries no less than faith.

The difficulty, then, is not that Christ and his message cannot justify themselves up to the hilt before the intellect and conscience of the modern man. The peculiarity of the religious crisis of the present day consists, rather, in the fact that the disciples of the Enlightenment do not take Christ's credentials seriously, in the first place, do not even take the trouble to hear the witnesses before they repudiate him, and set

aside the phenomenon of his miraculous life, death, and resurrection—without critical investigation of any kind—with the phrase of Renan's *"il n'y a pas de surnaturel."* So ingrained and native to them is this principle that it has been elevated to the sole criterion for distinguishing what is original and genuine in the life of Jesus from later interpolations, and for opposing to one another the "mythical" Christ of faith and the "real" Jesus of history. Thus the question about Christ is falsely put at the outset, since what can only be maintained after full inquiry is tacitly assumed as a presupposition of the whole discussion.

This presupposition of Renan is not the outcome of some age-long experience of mankind, a sort of common sense that is independent of science. It is exclusively the result of the sterile spirit of the Enlightenment, the very spirit whose other cultural after-effects we are today condemning to banishment, because experience has taught us only too well that it is unproductive and contrary to nature, a spirit of death. The unnaturalness and unproductiveness of this rationalistic attitude leaps at once to the eye, when we discuss the phenomenon of Jesus. As soon as man has made his autonomous thinking into the sole norm, or even the creative source, of all reality, he has enclosed himself within

four walls, and blocked all the avenues which would lead him to the reality which lies beyond the forms of his thoughts and his ideas. This is Hybris, that vaulting pride which prevents a man from seeking further, a lack of that quality of tenderness and fragrance which is native to every healthy spirit, a lack of reverence before the possibilities and enigmas of existence. A man who possessed this reverence would not cross-examine God and the Divine like a lawyer dealing with a suspect on trial. Instead, he would begin with words of petition: "Lord, help thou mine unbelief." "Lord, teach me to pray." For even if he conceived of the God of revelation merely as a possibility, such a man would find that this mere possibility challenged him, stirred him, chastened him not only in his intellect but in the whole of his being. For it would be no unimportant possibility, but one that involved the whole of his destiny, the possibility that his tiny ego was committed for weal or woe into the hands of an infinite, absolute Ego. It would mean that he as a created being was not called upon to open the discussion of religion, but, rather, that it depended entirely on whether God would speak to *him*, would in his grace disclose himself to the human mind. In other words: the truly reverent man realizes that, even if it is only a possibility that

God became incarnate and entered history, such a God can never be a petrified, inactive datum of history, an object of historico-philological research, but must be active and giving, the maker of history, of inward, personal, passionate history, the history of our souls. And he knows too that in dealing with the most personal of all realities only receptiveness is in place, complete surrender of the inner self, faith and trust from the core of his being. If God is truly a living God, he can never be a mere object of human questioning, or amenable to exploitation by human curiosity. In any case he will have to be for us a subject also, at work in creation, communicating himself to us in grace. And so in the nature of the case there can be no other way to him than that of humble expectancy, the way of reverent attention to hear whether he will speak to us, and the way of faith and trust when his word of revelation is directed toward us.

This is the only reasonable attitude in face of the possibility that the Divine exists, and the only one that is unprejudiced in the proper sense. The purely critical attitude loses the road at the start, because it does not do justice to the object it is investigating, the nature of the Divine, and remains a prisoner to the presuppositions of the age of the Enlightenment.

But the argument can be carried further: wherever the critical attitude has hardened into a fundamental *a priori* negation of the supernatural, the influence at work is not only that of the presuppositions of the Enlightenment in general, but also that of monistic systems in particular. Here, again, we light on a characteristic of our age. Idealistic monism is the disease of our times. Men will hear nothing of a personal transcendent God, a God whose own endless life is lived in a threefold sharing of life and love, to whom the world is in no sense necessary, but who in the abundance of his goodness freely created it out of nothing. For monistic philosophy such a God is extinct—a mere ghost, the product of Semitic fancy. Men require a God who is tied to the world, who exists only in and through us, who reveals himself only in our spiritual self and the deeps of our personality, who is in the end only a metaphysical representation of our own infinite soul—that ultimate mysterious reality which governs us, which in eternal polarity to the physical brings forth the life of the spirit, and produces from its unsullied womb all science, morality, and culture. This monistic conception of God is applied also to the picture of Jesus. According to this view the great achievement of the Man of Nazareth was that he was the first to bring into the world

the message of our divine humanity, and of "the kingdom of God within us," and that he was the first to complete the equation "God is man." He found by experience, to an extent that no one before him had done, that we men are not only like God, but equal to God and of divine descent. In this case Jesus is divine in exactly the same sense in which we are, and the peculiar quality of his spirituality was simply that, in mystic absorption he kept watch over the divine spark, and scrupulously avoided all contact with the extraneous unspiritual world. Since Nietzsche, it has become the regular tradition in monistic circles to ascribe to Jesus a feverish sensitiveness to the touch of the profane and worldly, and to characterize him as the paragon of pure inwardness, as the man who embodied the peace of God, and who in contrast to Paul held himself apart from all strife, domination, and turmoil. Paul, the Jewish fanatic, was the first to see in Jesus' life a sharp opposition to the Pharisees, and to turn the purely human, quietist, inward Jesus into the Divine fighter, the world-subduer.

It is one of the oddities of history that the idealistic Jesus and the monistic God are proclaimed precisely by those people who want men to be mature and strong, healthy and powerful, and who are anxious to summon them by

Nietzschean eloquence to a life full of power, heroism, and the pride of beauty. Their presuppositions are plain: belief in a transcendent Creator is an intolerable burden and chain imposed on mankind; only the man who is fully autonomous, who has wholly cut himself loose from the Creator, is truly in possession of himself; the original powers of mankind are only preserved in the eternal polarity of Logos and Bios, of reason and vital energy; and therefore the revelation in Jesus is not that of a full, perfect, vital man, but of only one pole of true vitality and power, the pole of concentrated spirituality.

Not many words are required to show how misguided and unnatural these presuppositions are. It is surely a fundamental fact of consciousness that we are in no sense "absolute" entities, that our souls, however much they may hide of the mysterious and the creative, are in no sense ultimates of supreme value, in which we can find our sufficiency, and beyond which we do not wish to force our way nor ask any further questions. It is much more true to say, that in the depths of our being, just at the point where new energies stream into our mind from the realm of the unconscious, we realize our inadequacy, that we are something conditioned, imperfect, fragmentary; we are, in fact, something which with

its elemental élan, its urge to assert itself, strains after what is unconditioned, perfect, whole, after a type of being which is essentially greater, rests in itself and fills itself, and creatively sustains that defenseless being of ours which would otherwise be on the brink of a sea of nothingness.

Saint Augustine clothes this elemental human experience in the words, "Our hearts are restless till they find rest in God." It is only in God that our soul becomes inwardly contented, healthy, strong, that in resolute daring it bursts the narrow, stifling walls that contain it within itself, and forces its way over the boundaries of itself into the world of objective, self-grounding Spirit. Then of set purpose it betakes itself into the primal relationship with the Absolute which is its native air, and without which it falls back into itself, ineffectual and devoid of meaning. Only the religious man is the "*homo bene ordinatus*," the well-ordered, properly integrated personality; for his existence, issuing from nothingness and surrounded by nothingness, can only find its final refuge and guarantee, its final inspiration and significance, in living obedience to the source of all reality and existence, the Living God. In God alone we live, in him we move, in him we have our being. He is not merely an abstract concept,

or a transcendental idea of reason—or a desert spirit. He is the Reality of all realities, the Spirit of all spirits, the Person of persons, the creative Source of meaning and value. And although his infinite Being transcends all created being and touches its broken line at no point, yet, because he is the creative Source of all existence, he dwells within us so completely that he is nearer to us than we are ourselves, he is the life of our life, the power of our powers. If we acknowledge this God above us and in us, our little life loses its accidental and episodic character. It is somehow taken up into the breadth and height of the divine purpose. With an infinite value in the center of its strivings, it knows many moments of lofty spiritual tension, it is steadfastly driven upward; it is a life of proud and adventurous struggle. Thus truly strong, live, healthy men are to be found only where the living personal Creator is recognized. This confirms the remark of Goethe to Riemer, that "men are only productive so long as they are religious." Productiveness in the highest sense, real creative power, can belong only to the man who acknowledges his highest value to be the Creator who works all in all. Wherever a nation has shown itself to be creative, it has derived its creative power not from a mere fiction, from acting "as if" it were driven on by

God, but from the full conviction: the living God *is*, he exists, he is the Reality of all realities.

As soon as we speak of "God," we can only really discuss, not a God who is tied to the world, but one who is transcendent and a Creator. Every believer of every living religion means this when he prays to his God.

It is, of course, true that God, because he is our Creator, rules all things in his wisdom and goodness, all being and becoming, all men and nations. He reveals himself not least in the primal will of every nation. Thus there is a natural revelation of God as well as a supernatural one. And, therefore, there is also a natural theology. Natural revelation and theology are always conditioned by "blood" and "nation," in so far as God does not here reveal himself to man by calling to him as a person through his living Word, but, rather, allows himself to be revealed by us in the mute symbols of his creation. We men are in this case not only the media of revelation, through which God makes known his existence and nature; we are ourselves in a certain sense the bearers of the revelation, those who create the revelation, since it is we who reduce the obscure and equivocal symbols of his creation to a plain meaning, and cause them to speak of his glory. There-

fore, according to the will of the Creator, all natural revelation and all natural religion founded upon it, are, in subject and content, born from human hopes and yearnings, from human doubts and fears, or achieved by the power of the human spirit.

They are thus a human creation. History offers no examples of men "in themselves," but only of men imprisoned and conditioned by blood and race. Natural revelation and religion, therefore, wherever they meet us as facts of life and history—and not as abstract products of pure philosophical thinking, as in the deism of the Enlightenment—reveal in the whole course of their development, in their creeds and their cultus, the stamp impressed upon them by the peculiarities of the nation in which they arise.

But natural revelation is not the sole possible form of divine self-disclosure. God's will to reveal himself and his manner of doing so are *his* concern, although they depend not on his caprice but on what his infinite wisdom and goodness decree; for he is not tied to the world, not a mere pole of cosmic reality, but the omnipotent Creator. The intellect of a creature may not take upon itself to prescribe to the All-wise, All-mighty God the ways along which his revelation should proceed. Just because God is absolute, self-caused, a Spirit who freely creates

out of the abundance of his spontaneity, there is an *a priori* probability that amounts to certainty, that he would not limit the riches of his freely flowing love to the forms prescribed once for all by the iron laws of nature. Rather would he disclose himself, over and above the visible token of his love in the creation, by encroaching upon the order of nature and speaking to men as Spirit to spirit and Person to person; he would as the Spirit of spirits speak to the human spirit through the living Word. Was it not to be expected that he would give a supernatural revelation in addition to the natural one, which should not bear the stamp of the purely human but be his work alone, his property alone, in origin and substance, and which would therefore in its content surpass all human thoughts, all racial wisdom? If this were really God's purpose, if his love is loftier and richer than can appear from the mere evidence of the creation, who dare question his right? He alone is Love, he alone is the Lord, and there is none other beside him.

If this is the case, it is surely to be expected that such a supernatural revelation, because it is not human wisdom but God's own Word, would come not to one particular nation, but to all men and nations alike. For "God is no respecter of persons." All men are his and written on his hand. So this revelation must be

supraracial, supranational. Of course inherited national characteristics will color the way in which the sublime and holy Word is apprehended and fashioned, and therefore a religion which is kindled by a supernatural revelation can never escape a racial and national impress. None the less it will relate to truths and values, which, because they are divine, transcend all that is human and conditioned by time, and are as immutable as God himself. In fact, we must go so far as to say: Since we owe supernatural revelation to a special act of God's love, and since it wells up from his innermost being, it will mirror in a very special sense the attributes of God, his infinite superiority to human standards, the complete otherness of his being. When it reaches men and nations, it will strike them, not as something native to them, but as something strangely alien, something "wholly other." And it may well be that its prophets and witnesses will be persecuted, stoned, or crucified.

We must, therefore, ask whether the living God has *in actual fact* revealed himself in this new, supernatural, personal fashion.

"God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his *Son*" (Hebrews 1. 1). That is the source of the Christian's enthusiasm and of his

consciousness of God. More than nineteen hundred years ago a Man appeared who stands sharply outlined against the background of history, whose life and death were so holy and unsullied, so lofty and unique, that, to quote Goethe again, there is no figure in the annals of mankind which can be even remotely compared with him. According to the witness of his nearest friends, sealed with their blood, this Man deliberately called himself the Lord of the Last Days, "the Son of man," the coming Judge of the world, and he knew himself to be the "only-begotten, well-beloved Son of the Highest." He substantiated this divine claim with an abundance of miracles and signs. These are so woven into the texture of his historical activity that they cannot be lightly picked from his brow like a wreath of roses. Further, his whole inner life was rooted in this claim, and especially that element in it which was deepest and most his own—his bond with the Father. Though he was so reverent and simple, so clear-minded and factual, he said as if it were something quite self-evident, "I and the Father are one." In the end he allowed himself for the sake of this consciousness to be brought to trial as a blasphemer; he was condemned by the highest religious authorities of his nation to death on a cross. He died. But

after three days—as his disciples bore witness their whole life long, in the face of suffering and death—he appeared alive and transfigured as their Lord and Saviour. Since then he has moved through history. And he is still moving through the world today.

That is the ground of our faith, the reason why Jesus is more to us than an idealist and a dreamer, more than a prophet of inwardness and pure spirituality. In him God has appeared to us. He is truly Son of God. The glory of the Lord is risen upon him.

And his humanity too is not mere inwardness, the flight of a sensitive soul from the world, nor is it mere senile resignation. It is power from on high. It is purposeful action. He came to "cast fire on the earth," and his sole desire was "that it should be kindled." Jesus is a burning firebrand, the lightning that sets the flames ablaze. The kingdom of heaven which in him broke through into the world, is not purely inward, a secluded island of peace. It is, rather, the crash of old worlds and the birth of new. It is a battle for God's kingdom of the future. It belongs to "the violent," who "take it by force"; to the reckless, who "let the dead bury their dead"; to the unflinching, who "having put their hand to the plough" do not "look back"; to the uncompromising, who "cut off their hand

and cast it from them" rather than let it be an "offense" to the kingdom of heaven; to the proud, the high-hearted, the fanatical, who sell all that they have to buy "one pearl of great price." Nothing is more perverse than to attend only to the soft, tender notes in his message, to its pity and humility, its peace and love, and to miss the fiery element, its eschatological intensity, the heroic impetus of its attack. And the hot breath of the heroic permeates not only his message but his whole personality. There can scarcely be a more misleading caricature of the historical Jesus than to see in him a sugary "Gentle Shepherd." He is not only the tender Saviour of our souls, but also and above all the Messiah of the wrath of God, whose scourge was wielded not merely in the Temple. Whenever he encountered anything cheap or spurious, anything decaying or decayed in the realm of the Spirit, as in the outstanding case of the Pharisaic caste—the classic example of self-satisfaction and narrow-minded arrogance—then his mission became a battle and his love for the Father a fire which consumed. His power of word and phrase at such a time was so magnificently royal and triumphant, so kindling and penetrating, so uncannily forceful, that its very uniqueness and greatness have always made it impossible not to recognize in such passages

the original Jesus; surely only an incredible lack of feeling for language and style could lead anyone to detect in it the hand of Paul. One cannot read the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, and fail to realize that these words and phrases are an expression of Jesus' life-purpose, that in the service of the All-holy One, the vision of his soul, he had from the beginning set his feet on that steepest of all paths, the path which led to death on Golgotha. So we see revealed in Jesus not only the divine life, but also human life in its noblest, loftiest form. It is heroism of Spirit and of power. Since the day on which Simon and Andrew, James and John left their nets and followed him, this heroism has illuminated all history, and called out thousands and tens of thousands of disciples and followers from all nations, races and civilizations. And discipleship of Christ will remain the loftiest and proudest, the most inspiring and imperious task of man—till the last Christian has perished and the last star has set in the heavens.

Let us return to our starting-point. We said: The spirit of the age in which we live affected the picture of Christ, on the formal side, by blocking up the path to the divine with the rationalistic prejudices of the Enlightenment; that its effect in the matter of content was to

deny the Christian idea of God, and therefore the divinity of Christ, in the interests of monistic conceptions, and to refuse to see in the phenomenon "Christ" anything but the purely human prophet of quietism and inwardness, of the kingdom of heaven "within us." But rationalism and monism are not the only tendencies of our time. If we examine the situation more carefully, it is clear that purely critical, analytic, autonomous thinking has lost a great deal of its influence, and survives only in the form of a vague rationalistic atmosphere; in fact, that it is about to be supplanted by a quite antithetical movement, with a marked anti-intellectual character, which sees the nature and value of human existence not in pale thought, but in full-blooded life, in the primitive power of a vitality which springs from the depths, which comes to us from the mothers of the race, which breaks forth from the soul of the nation. From Nietzsche, the eloquent prophet of this new gospel of Life, there is a clear succession, despite certain variations, through Bergson and Klages to Stephan George. A new manner of living is coming to birth. The important thing according to it is not merely the spirit, but the proper unity of spirit and body—or, more exactly, the interpenetration of Logos and Bios, of reason and vital energy. According to this theory of

living, the foundation and the dynamic of our nature is the life and living experience that spring from the depths of our existence and from the strength in our blood; it is the elasticity that thrives on our physical powers; it is the vigor of our natural instincts. From this vital source our mental activities, our thinking and willing, if they are not to be obstructive and weakening, must receive their impetus and their full-blooded content. Our culture must therefore on no account be uprooted from its mother earth of the senses, much less be brought into opposition to them. Not the man who has renounced sensuous life, who has been divided and torn asunder by the disastrous opposition of body and spirit, of Bios and Logos, but the man who has been restored to inner unity and wholeness, and who by reason of this unity has become powerful, creative, upstanding, proud and bold—he is the man of the future!

It was to be expected that this new ideal of life would not be without influence on modern representations of Jesus. Care was of course taken to avoid casting aspersions on Jesus' spirituality, and ascribing to him anything that tended to be antiphysical or devisive of his personality. No trait in the character of Jesus is so impressively attested as the incredible unity and wholeness of his personality. He is, in

fact, the only Man who was never untrue to himself and his conscience; he lived his life out of the wholeness and fullness of his being as no other man has done; he is the only Man whose meat and drink it was, in prosperity and adversity alike, to do the will of the Father. Thus there was no rift in his human nature, no discontinuity in his human life. "I and the Father are one." And therefore Jesus' message takes anything but an antiphysical turn. It is in no sense determined by the opposition of the physical and the spiritual, but entirely by that of the terrestrial and the superterrestrial, of the "*Aion houtos*," the present age, and the kingdom of heaven. Its character is eschatological, not one-sidedly ascetic. That is why even his contemporaries placed him at an appreciable distance from John the Baptist, who appeared in a raiment of camel's hair and ate locusts and wild honey. In contrast to him they poured scorn on Jesus as a "gluttonous man and a winebibber," and made it a serious reproach against him, that he did not require his disciples to fast, for "the disciples of John fasted oft." Jesus, indeed, understood the summoning of disciples as something deeply serious, something heroic. He demanded from them repudiation of goods and possessions, renunciation of father and mother, and, when necessary, the surrender of life it-

self. But these heroic demands were aimed not simply at the constraint and annihilation of the physical but at the sanctification of the whole man. Jesus was not concerned with escape from the physical, with the dissolution of human nature into pure spirit, but to enlist both body and soul in the service of the heavenly kingdom which was drawing near in his person. This included, of course, severe discipline of the body. Disciples of Jesus will never be released from "bearing the cross." And they shall fast "in those days when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them." But Jesus was too great, too mature and free, to tolerate an unhealthy, oppressive asceticism. "When thou fastest, anoint thy head." Just as his own eye was intoxicated by the beauty of the lilies and the grace of little children, and just as the warm fragrance of an exalted sensuousness, inspired through and through by love for the Father, breathes through his parables, so also it is not his will to exterminate sensuous feeling in his disciples, but to release it and transfigure it in the service of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore his disciples, so far as we know them, are in no way warped and thwarted half-men or quarter-men, but full-blooded whole men. How else could they have conquered the world? And the two disciples whom he called the "sons of thunder" because

of their "Sturm und Drang," their fiery temperament, were those who stood particularly near to him.

So it was not at the moral personality of Jesus that Nietzsche, and the "affirmation of Life" movement which he kindled, could take offense. His stumbling-block was rather Jesus' gospel of redemption. He refused to admit that the historical Jesus was ever conscious of being a "Redeemer," and this on the ground that such a Redeemer presupposed a broken, enslaved and suffering humanity which required redemption, a humanity in its nature corrupt and therefore incapable of hearing or responding to the modern call to "Life." This much is clear: however much the old ideas of the Enlightenment are still here operative, denying to Jesus everything that is hard to conceive and mysterious, and so also the mystery of redemption, it is in the end from the growing ideal of "Vitality" that the attitude which repudiates the Redeemer derives its passion and its strength. It is Nietzsche himself who is here its inspiration and who has bequeathed to the whole movement his prejudices and anti-Christian instincts. Nietzsche saw in Christianity a typical product of decadence, an ideology fed on disillusionment; a religion of the "small people," who introduced a cowardly, mean-

spirited transformation of values into the world in order to defend themselves against the healthy, strong, proud "supermen": on the one hand, they reviled and blasphemed the courage and strength, the wealth and splendor, the acumen and pride which had elevated the supermen above them; and, on the other hand, they canonized the servile attitude imposed on them by the supermen, making virtues of humility and patience, simplicity and foolishness, lowliness and poverty. Now, if Christianity really bore this taint of pauperism, if it were really born of the hate-instincts of the cowardly herd, no indignation would be too violent to condemn it and to extirpate it root and branch. For then it would be a universal danger, the breeding-ground and incubator of everything small, ignoble, and vulgar, the poisonous antagonist and arch-enemy of all that is heroically great and glorious in the world. The message of world-redemption and a redeemer of mankind would sound like diabolic irony, like the canonization and glorification of meanness. It would be, in fact, nothing but the fevered offspring of a weakling decadence, the infantile product of a broken-down ramshackle will-to-live, which must needs avail itself of alien assistance, alien guarantees, a mediator, a redeemer, in order to assert itself.

But is Nietzsche's version of Christianity the real and genuine Christianity which has carved its way through the centuries, and stands before us as a living factor in history today? If we consider its origins and beginnings, we do not find the slightest traces of decadence; there is no cowardly cringing before the great ones of the earth, no treacherous concealment behind fallacious ideologies, no subterranean agitation of the small against the great. The spirit that we find is not the spirit of slaves but of heroes. Did not the early adherents almost without exception, so far as our historical knowledge goes, die a heroic death for Christ? And did not the blood of the martyrs flow three centuries long? It is useless to whittle down their number to insignificant proportions. That it was huge is attested not only by Christian but also by pagan writers like Tacitus,[1] Pliny,[2] and Bruttius,[3] and not least by the rescripts issued against the Christians by the emperors from Trajan to Maximin Daia. We know of no spiritual movement in history which produced so many testimonies sealed in blood as Christianity. And what did these heroes die for?

[1] The Roman historian (c. 55—c. 117 A. D.).

[2] The Roman orator and administrator (c. 61—c. 113 A. D.). Known chiefly by his letters.

[3] A pagan historian of uncertain date, mentioned by the church historian Eusebius in the fourth century.

What was their true hope and yearning? In no sense the values of this world. All earthly schemes of value, and the tensions which they involve, especially those between high and lowly, strong and weak, rich and poor, were deliberately left behind them, so that they might aim at a goal that lay beyond, a goal to which rich and poor, sick and whole were alike called —the glory of the kingdom of God, eternal life in God, with God, through God. Their viewpoint was eschatological, their hope was in the future. But this hope is not to be interpreted as if they imagined that, in this longed-for future, God in his goodness and power would enter the lists for the disinherited, and bring low the mighty ones of the earth; as if the kingdom of heaven were in the end nothing but an office for the adjustment of earthly inequalities and for the compensation of earthly disabilities —a kind of well-heated sick-room for the valetudinarian or a heavenly convalescent home. It is precisely here that the difference may be observed between the ideas behind the pagan mysteries and the Christian conception of life. According to the latter, eternal life is not an infinite prolongation of earthly felicity, but an entirely new supernatural salvation, which is as qualitatively distinct from earthly happiness as God is from the world. For it is in its very

nature a participation by grace in the life of God, an immediate vision and taste of the divine essence, an experience of the fullness of God such as eye hath not seen nor ear heard. All earthly values pale before this one value: God. Or, rather, when God, the infinitely glorious, the supreme Good, is recognized in experience by the faithful as the deepest significance and most lofty content of all earthly spheres of value, these are themselves translated into the divine life. They shine no longer in the light of this world, but in the "light of God." Everything which we have regarded as holy and sublime, noble and great, on this earth, will remain holy and sublime, noble and great, in the perspective of eternal life. But it will be seen no longer in its purely earthly relations, and therefore as essentially conditioned and dubious, but in its final infinite fulfillment and completion by God. The one and only God, the Three-in-One, in the infinity of his triune omnipotence, wisdom, and goodness, will become the one and only value, in the bosom of whose riches and splendor all earthly goods lie, to issue forth in new undreamed of fashion, pulsing with the life of the triune God, and binding the hearts of men. Thus eternal life, the lofty goal of Christendom, is no lifeless, sensual good, no soft pillow for the weary and

resigned. It is spirit from the Spirit of God. It is activity; a rhythmic breathing-in of the breath of the living God. Without that would it be life at all?

And because the Christian hope is that of a truly eternal *life*, by which our earthly existence is furnished with its task, and its inner and outward form; because that existence is to be understood as a journey, a pilgrimage, a preparation for that fullness of life which we shall have in God, it shows of necessity an inward tension, a striving toward something better and higher which lies before it. It is a race for a prize on an uneven track, it is nothing languid, it is no pale, anaemic virtuousness. It is tension and battle—*militia Christi*. There is no apostle who stresses the heroic manliness of the Christian attitude to life more strikingly than Paul. His letters are examples of anything but nerveless flirtation with Syrian herd-instincts. On the contrary, they incite men ever and again with apostolic earnestness to grow up into the "whole man," into the "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4. 13). This is Paul: "Quit you like men, be strong" (1 Corinthians 16. 13). Of course it is true that the so-called "passive" virtues—humility and patience, gentleness and pity, long-suffering and self-sacrifice—have an important place and

function in the Christian ideal. But their passivity is only external and apparent. Seen from within, it is precisely they which are the strongest of dynamics—no weary acquiescence in the inevitable, but an inward mastery of every adversity, a victory of spirit over matter, a triumphant: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Their passivity is no less active than the attitude of a soldier on the battlefield, who is ready to endure every privation and to lay down his life for the sake of his heroic ideal. It may well be that this inner energy, this secret heroism of the spirit, has not been uniformly preserved along the whole line of the Christian tradition, and that biologically weak individuals and nations have become blind to its value, and have therefore lent whole reaches of Christianity the character of feebleness and weariness. It may well be that the polarity of the world and God, of the "here" and the "beyond," of time and eternity, which dominates Christian thought, has been and still is misinterpreted by a few narrow-minded individuals and circles as an antithesis of body and spirit, of Bios and Logos; and it may be too that the carrying of this misrepresentation into practice has led many people to see in Christianity merely an asceticism which denied value to life. In reality the Christian Church itself, as we

emphasized at the start, combated propensities of this kind for centuries, with all the spiritual and worldly power at its disposal. Wherever living Christianity flourished, the whole man—not merely spirit, but body and blood and passion—was consecrated to the service of God. There is fundamentally no human quality or capacity, no mental or physical value, which Christianity would care to omit from its conception of the saint.

It is significant in this regard that the authoritative Catholic theologian, Saint Thomas Aquinas, takes the same view and gives the same description of the values of natural morality—on which Christianity builds—as Aristotle, the sage of ancient Greece. According to this view, the virtues which discipline our thinking, that is, the intellectual virtues (*virtutes intellectuales*), stand at the head of the hierarchy of natural moral values. This implies that mental serenity and maturity are the hallmark of the moral man. Below these intellectual virtues are ranged the moral virtues in the narrow sense (*virtutes morales*), that is, those which guide the life of will and instinct. The first of these is justice (*justitia*), the sense of what is just and reasonable, an inner sense of fairness. Immediately next to it comes courage (*fortitudo*), the power of dauntless decision, of proud adventur-

ousness. Last and least of all the virtues in Saint Thomas's list comes temperance (*temperantia*), which has to keep in order our lower appetites, our nutritive and reproductive instincts. Thus, according to Saint Thomas, natural morality in no sense culminates in the destruction of sense, or the suppression of man's animal instincts. It aims, rather, at the regulation of the *whole* life of will and instinct. The serene and mature thinker, the man with a sense of what is right and an inner fairness, the resolute, virile, self-controlled man, is the one required by Saint Thomas as the basis for the building up of a Christian. He holds of course that temperance, the disciplining of our instinctive life, is indispensable to natural morality. But it is not to him its chief or most important constituent. And he is in no sense concerned simply to identify morality with it. The great theologian devotes a special section (*Summa Theologiae*, II, 2; Quaestio 141, art. 2) to the question whether temperance is the chief virtue in the hierarchy of values. He comes decisively to a negative conclusion. He is determined to underline the fact that it is not temperance, but *love* which is the queen of the virtues. With this in mind, one cannot speak seriously of a fundamental ascetic tendency in the Christian ethic, which would suppress the life of the

senses. If people, when they wish to obtain a clear idea of the nature of Christian morals, will pay attention not to hysterical fanatics but to the clear, lucid statements of the Church and its most honored teachers, they will be forced to conclude that the ideal of the healthy, virile, brave, disciplined man is not the ideal of Nietzsche and his school alone. It has always been the ideal which the Church has presupposed for the operation of grace, when it has spoken of the "honorable man" (*homo honestus*) and of natural morality. The Church has always linked itself to natural morality when summoning men to discipleship of Christ and preparing them for eternal life. According to the two guiding principles of its theology, that "grace presupposes nature" and that "grace does not destroy but perfects nature," it is still today the proper mission of the Church not to overlook or destroy the natural moral capacities and dispositions of the faithful, but to affirm them in their totality, and by the help of grace to bring them to perfection and raise them to the supernatural. The saint, the *homo sanctus,* the man made capable of the vision of God and of eternal life, is the same "honorable man," striving naturally after moral loftiness, but now laid hold of by the grace of the Holy Spirit in the depths of his being, at the point where his natural moral

capacities and powers rise from his inmost soul. Then, by the power of this grace, in miraculous untrammeled freedom, his natural moral capacity is transfigured into a purity and perfection which does not and cannot exist in the purely natural realm, so that he becomes a likeness of the Only-begotten Son of God, a well-beloved child of the Heavenly Father, a temple of the Holy Spirit.

According to the Catholic doctrine of justification—which is for us a development in the direct line from Jesus' message of the kingdom of heaven which had drawn near in his person—it is not as if the justified, new man, the "saint," were and remained essentially sinful, nor as if the new thing that happened to him, his justification, worked independently of his natural capacities, and were effected by the purely transcendental activity of God. Justifying grace is always and in its essence strictly supernatural and transcendent; but in its working it penetrates the structure of the human being. It does not work upon him or independently of him, but in him and through him, through his moral will and conduct, through the "honorable man," effecting an inward renewal and transfiguration of character. But seen in its deepest light, the occurrence is still the working of the Holy Spirit, the freely flowing grace of Christ, which

gives our moral powers a new celestial élan, inflames them with a new love, and so fits them for the kingdom of heaven. Thus natural morality, supernatural saintliness, and eternal life are in essential connection with one another. There cannot be one without the other. Christianity is neither purely natural morality nor purely supernatural mysticism; it is a human striving to "take by force" a heavenly kingdom, a human responsibility and a divine gift.

Here we proceed to our last question: why is purely natural morality insufficient to achieve eternal life? Why does man, naturally moral, still require justification and sanctification through the grace of Christ? This is the question of the Redeemership of Christ, and leads us into the very center of Christianity. It is also the question which is the focus of the most passionate controversy today.

What does the Mediatorship of Christ mean? We have touched on the fact that Christianity in no sense destroys natural morality in all its breadth and depth, but roundly affirms it and calls forth its best, and that in its very essence supernatural morality presupposes natural morality. This should be enough to allay the suspicion that the mediation of Christ, and the message contained in it of redemption by grace, implies a kind of heavenly substitute for moral

action. On that view the Redeemer vicariously took upon himself the whole gamut of our moral tasks, so that redemption would consist merely in liberation from personal moral responsibility, in a luxurious confidence in the finished work of Christ. Such a lubberly form of Christianity may have been propounded by certain antinomian eccentrics in the early days, but it has never been seriously put forward by the Church. Even views which, like that of Lutheran Christianity, do not recognize the free moral action of man as a constituent and organic moral factor in the process of justification, take it for granted that a man must "come to himself" and amend his ways, and then regard moral perfection and sanctification as the precious fruits of justification. Nowhere does the gospel vibrate with such a moral enthusiasm and such a sense of personal moral responsibility as where it speaks of our redemption through Christ. For we know that the gracious God is also the righteous God, and that the forgiving Saviour is also our Judge.

What is meant by redemption through Christ? From what are we redeemed? The question and its answer can only be understood by someone who is conscious that his own small section of reality is not the whole, but, on the contrary, is rooted and grounded in a reality

that lies behind, in the primal will of the living Creator, and who realizes that it cannot be sufficient to order, as a moral man, his relationships to his own small world, and to leave out of account his deep-seated primal relationships with the living Creator. Since we men are created by God, we are responsible, in all that we do and fail to do, not only to ourselves and to our own conscience, but through our conscience to the all-holy and primal will of the Eternal. Moral guilt is in every case religious guilt as well. It is not only disloyalty to ourselves, or a disturbance of the "equilibrium of existence"; it has metaphysical implications. It is disloyalty to the Thrice-Holy. It casts its shadow across the infinity of God, and can in no way be made good by man. For anyone who has never shuddered in the loneliness and estrangement of his soul at the thought of the infinite reality of the living God, who has never cried out in the consciousness of his guilt, "God be merciful to me, a sinner"—for him my words are vain; he need read no further. For him the message of Original Sin and Redemption will always remain an empty myth, even though it is written in letters of brass on the pages of history and has proved its immeasurable creativeness. His only logical course is to remain fettered to the natural moral man, and to find the

supreme earthly value in proud self-assertion. But for anyone who is seized by the terror and mystery of God, and so affirms from his heart that Calvary is a possibility with God, and then encounters in its fullness the divine claim of the figure whom we call Jesus of Nazareth—for him the possibility of Calvary becomes a shattering actuality, the actuality of the "new covenant in his blood" (1 Corinthians 11. 25). It is there for the first time, in the glorious actuality of the covenant-blood, that our existence begins to emerge from the shadows and to attain the final solution of its enigmas. For since the day of Calvary we know that the burden of human fate, all the evil that man has done and continues to do, all the agony he has suffered and continues to suffer, above all, the grim cruelty of inexorable death—all this hideous necessity is not merely a symptom of biological decay within the sphere of this world. It contains a weird and uncanny element from the beyond. It is a curse, a punishment of God. Our phenomenal world still shows today the traces of a tragedy which once played itself out, in the region of the invisible and supernatural, between God and the human soul. It still bears the stains of that breach of faith by which humanity, in the primal will of Adam, reared its head in concentrated defiance and renounced

its allegiance to its Creator; in crazy megalomania it deified its own self, and has conceived and brought forth, from the poisoned womb of its self-deification, sin upon sin, suffering upon suffering, death upon death. The shadow of moral fiasco and guilt, the wrath of God, lies over humanity. It has sold its birthright; it has forfeited its original fellowship of life and love with the living God. It has run into the cul-de-sac of self and is bound by a thousand chains to the powers of earth. It was not in the original purpose of God's wisdom and goodness that the spirit of man should become the slave of the unspiritual and be turned to dust and ashes. The mere natural man, cramped up in himself, does not possess that whole, perfected, fulfilled humanity which God purposed. For he created man by his grace, that he might strive to pass all natural barriers, and win his way through to the infinite reaches and imperishable life of God.

From what has been said it is obvious that, when a Christian, or more especially a Catholic, speaks of Original Sin and Redemption, of "fallen" and "restored" nature, his words are not to be biologically interpreted. He does not mean that our innate, human, or in our case, our German nature, is destroyed or corrupted in its inmost kernel, that it cannot continue to be at all or in due measure an

unfailing well of fresh effervescent life, an imperishable source of rich streams of power, such as those that have flowed from the German nature over the whole earth. It is, on the contrary, the Catholic faith, that the kernel of human nature remained untouched by Original Sin. As was explained above, the fact that human nature has remained fundamentally intact, alike in thought and will, is the indispensable presupposition of Redemption. For the power of Christ's grace is all the greater and wider, the more healthy and perfect the powers through which it can take effect. The Christian dogma of Original Sin and guilt simply declares that human nature, which remains physically intact throughout, is corrupted in its superterrestrial, supernatural relationships—that since the sin of Adam it has fallen into a false basic attitude toward the Creator and Lord of nature. This attitude has affected the natural capacities of knowing, willing, and feeling, in so far as these capacities have languished more and more in their approach to God, in their religious function, in their freedom and receptiveness to the divine and holy, and so have fallen a prey to the service of the material. So understood, redemption is not a process of mystical mending, carried out on our natural self, a celestial patching to repair a rent in nature. Redemption has

to do, rather, with supernature; it is an event brought about by the tender mercy of God for Christ's sake in a realm beyond our natural existence; it is an extraction from the sphere of the wrath of God and a rehabilitation into the sphere of the divine life and love. To be redeemed means to become alive in God through Christ our Lord.

No one can seriously speak, therefore, of the degrading or demoralizing effect of the Christian doctrine of Sin and Redemption. Its concern is not with nature but with supernature. Where Original and inherited Sin complete their grim work, they destroy nature not in itself but in its connection with supernature. And where guilt is expunged and man redeemed, it is supernature which brings to humanity its completion and transfiguration, its final consecration, and its undreamed-of significance. A glance at the path which redemption takes may serve to clinch the argument.

Knowledge of Original Sin confirms and strengthens in a thoughtful man the consciousness of his own moral insecurity. By tracking down his daily blunders and follies to their final metaphysical causes, their embeddedness in the Original Sin of mankind, he learns to see his nature as it really is and not as the ideal which he thought it was. He loses the faculty of call-

ing it divine. Christian humility is born in him. And this on its obverse side is just sincerity. Sincerity demands truth, and thus humility has not the slightest connection with inferiority complexes. It is creative, for it does not immerse itself in its own weakness and feebleness. Made fruitful by the divine love, it rather drives on the human understanding and will—which had not been destroyed in their physical nature by inherited guilt, but had only been diverted from their original source and goal, God the Lord—to fix their gaze upon the possibilities of exaltation and redemption and prepare themselves for the redeeming God. Thus the first step onward and upward is taken, the step of humility and penitence and expectant trust. And then, led on by God's gracious hand, a man begins to see in ever clearer light, and to acknowledge with ever greater confidence, the new divine reality that has dawned in the Redeemer, till at last he rises in faith and love from the depths of his estrangement to the highest that is granted to our nature, the sunlit heights of the divine life and love, the liberty of the children of God. Thereby something new has taken place within him. It did not originate with us, for we were dead, the dead men of God. It came through another and greater, one near to God and equal to God, who gave him-

self up to die that we might live. We owe our redemption to another, to our Lord Jesus Christ. It was the heroism of his unsparing devotion to God and man that gave us Christians birth. When we in faith and love acclaimed this heroism and appropriated it in the sacrament, our estranged humanity was received once again into the old relationship of love with the living God. We became children of God. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1. 12, 13).

But however much this new rank is due to another, Christ the Redeemer, and surpasses all human possibilities, it nevertheless, on the psychological plane, has a transfiguring and reconstructive effect on the soul of man. For in our surrender in faith and love to the heroism of the Redeemer, it has poured into our will with formative energy. It has become the fundamental pattern of our new existence in God. We cannot be true, stanch Christians save by following Christ in that unsparing devotion to God and man, which is depicted for us in his life and above all in his heroic death upon the cross. Such is the full and original significance

of the Christian belief in redemption; it is not merely an external affirmation of the heroism of Christ's death. Nor is it merely an affirmation of the richness of life which has sprung from his death. "To believe in Christ the Redeemer" means, properly speaking and in the last resort, to enter inwardly and personally into the redeeming heroism of Christ, to set it up as the guiding and decisive force in the center of our will-to-live and of our personal existence; it means so to merge our little life in the greatness of the Redeemer's life, that they become one life. The heroic has always been woven into the texture of Christian living, and without it Christianity has never been wholly genuine. Out of this heroic attitude grows up quite naturally that noble, joyous pride which comes to us like a refreshing wind from the figures of our saints. They know of nothing more exalted, more precious, more royal, than to follow Christ in the strength and solitude of their souls, far from the noise of the crowd, and with him and through him to sacrifice their insignificant, harmless lives for their brethren. When Saint Agatha was reproached by the heathen judge with sharing the poverty-stricken life of the Christians, although she was the child of a noble family, she replied, "I know of nothing more noble than the service of Christ."

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